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EDITORIAL

The thesis used as this number of the Quarterly is here presented as submitted by the author. There are certain errors in the comments of the author known as such by the four members of the family still living at Montgomery but these errors are not of such a character as to destroy the value of the material and they are not edited out of his presentation.

Peter A. Brannon
Editor

FIVE CONFEDERATES: THE SONS OF BOLLING HALL IN THE CIVIL WAR

by

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THESIS

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PREFACE

I was first introduced to the five Confederates and their war letters by Dr. Barnes F. Lathrop early in the spring of 1957. Dr. Lathrop also suggested that a thorough study of these letters could serve as the basis for a Master's thesis. From the time I accepted his suggestion, he has given me wise counsel and constructive criticism to the end that the story of the five Confederates might be told. I am grateful for his assistance.

I am thankful for my wife, Barbara, and for my daughter, Becky, whose patience and understanding never wavered when the head of the household went off to fight the War with the Five Confederates.

Charles T. Jones, Jr.

San Marcos, Texas

January, 1961

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"Five of us were in the war."

—In a letter from John Hall, Chafin's Farm, Virginia, to Hines Hall, June 5, 1864.

CHAPTER I

This thesis tells the story of five brothers—Bolling Hall III, Crenshaw Hall, James A. Hall, John E. Hall, and Thomas B. Hall—five of the nine sons of the second Bolling Hall who served in the Confederate States Army. The Hall boys were sons and grandsons of prominent Alabama planters.[1] The story of their experiences based upon the letters they wrote home to their father and other members of the family describes the price one southern family had to pay for the war.[2]

Their grandfather, the first Bolling Hall, was born December 25, 1767, in Dinwiddie County, Virginia. In 1792 Hall moved to Hancock County, Georgia. where he achieved substance as a planter. He was also involved in politics representing the Milledgeville district in Congress, March 4, 1811-March 3, 1817. He left Georgia in 1818 and settled in Autauga County, Alabama. He was not especially prominent in Alabama political affairs, but did correspond with various Southern leaders, including John C. Calhoun.

The father of the Hall boys, Bolling Hall II, born in 1813, had carried on his father's occupation and his interest in politics. He was a member of the Alabama house in 1849, 1851, and 1853. Although he never held any important office, he was close to the "Montgomery Regency," and politics fill his correspondence. He was supported by the co-operationists in 1860 but was beaten by his opponent who favored immediate secession. He was loyal to the state, however, and devoted himself to the Confederate cause.

At the beginning of 1861, Bolling Hall III, or Bolling Hall, Jr.,[3] the oldest of the Hall Boys, was studying law at the Uni-

[1]For the history of the Bolling Hall family before the Civil War, see Ora Lee Cupp, "The Bolling Halls, A Planter Family of Georgia and Alabama, 1792-1860" (unpublished M.A. thesis, The University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 1949).

[2]The **Bolling Hall Papers, 1785-1898,** comprising several thousand manuscripts, are in the Alabama State Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama. Microfilm copies of the correspondence, January 11, 1807-April 22, 1865, are in the University of Texas Library, where they are classified as Ramsdell Microfilms, Rolls 319B-322.

[3]The third Bolling Hall signed his letters Bolling Hall, Jr. His father was addressed as Major Bolling Hall.

versity of Virginia. Deeply interested in the events of his day, and enthusiastic for the Southern cause, he saw the storm approaching. To his father he observed: "I fear nothing will avert a civil war. The students just from Washington say that the general opinion is that war is inevitable."[4]

Following the bombardment and capture of Fort Sumter, Bolling sought his father's advice about his future course of action. His letter left no doubt that he had already made up his mind to respond to the call to arms.[5] As a member of the University Cadets, he participated on the night of April 18 in the seizure by the Virginia authorities of Harper's Ferry and its valuable arms machinery.[6] Soon afterward Bolling was back in Alabama, where he volunteered at Montgomery on May 15, 1861, and was mustered into service on June 2, 1861, as a private in (Old) Company L, Sixth Regiment, Alabama Infantry.[7] Colonel John Seibels, who had served in the Mexican War, commanded the regiment.[8]

Late in May the Sixth Alabama was ordered to Corinth, Mississippi. In his first letter from Corinth, Bolling described Colonel Seibels as

> . . . very unpopular. He cuses everyone. He told them all a day or two since that he didn't come here to get popular. He asked Lieutenant Kirkpatrick whether he was popular with them. Kirkpatrick replied, "Yes, they curse me a great deal." "Then," says Seibels, "you are a good officer for if you are popular with them I know you are not worth a damn."[9]

Bolling also had much to say about their trip to Corinth, which was made in box cars. Bolling had managed to ride part way with some of the officers and share their mess. At

[4]Bolling Hall, Jr., University of Virginia, to Father, January 1, 1861.
[5]Bolling Hall, Jr., University of Virginia, to Father, April 14, 1861.
[6]Major Bolling Hall, n.p., to the Hon. Secretary of War, n.d. This seems to be the first draft of a letter. See also Douglas Southall Freeman, **"Lee's Lieutenants** (3 vols., New York: Scribner's, 1942), I, 9.
[7]Compiled Military Service Record of Bolling Hall, Jr., R.G. 109, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
[8]Joseph Wheeler, "Alabama," **Confederate Military History,** edited by Clement Evans (12 vols., Atlanta, Georgia, 1899), VII, 72.
[9]Bolling Hall, Jr., Corinth, Miss., to Father, May 30, 1861.

Chattanooga he was impressed with the fact that "one fellow was charged ten cents for washing his face." They arrived in Corinth on Sunday, May 30. As white tents spread out in every direction, the town took on a "truly war-like appearance." Bolling's time was consumed mostly in drilling, an activity which he was satisfied he knew more of than did any other in his company.[10]

Crenshaw, next oldest of the sons of Bolling Hall, had, like Bolling, Jr., volunteered as a private on May 15, 1861. He became a member of Captain G. B. DuVal's (Old) Company D,[11] Sixth Regiment, Alabama Infantry. At Corinth, Crenshaw was stationed only a quarter of a mile from Bolling. Crenshaw's military service record described him as being five feet and ten inches tall, with light hair, grey eyes, and light complexion.[12] As a classmate of Bolling's at the University of Alabama, he had been much inferior to Bolling in behavior, careless in his habits, constantly in debt, disposed to blame professors for his failures, and sick a great deal of the time.[13] To his mother Bolling had reported: "I give him lectures on honesty, at which he growls very harshly . . . He will think before long that I am worse than you or father ever was on him . . . You would be perfectly how well he takes them (the lectures)."[14] In spite of serious difficulties and Bolling's lectures, Crenshaw graduated from the University of Alabama in 1859. By 1860 he had returned to the University seeking practical experience in writing essays and reviews of current publications.[15]

James A. Hall, the third son of Bolling Hall, had, like his older brothers, been a student at the University of Alabama. He was still an undergraduate when war broke out. The details of his entering military service are not clear, but it appears that he enlisted at Montgomery prior to September, 1861. He joined Captain T. L. Faulkner's Company, the Au-

[10]Bolling Hall, Jr., Corinth, Miss., to Father, May, 1861.

[01]Compiled Military Service Record of Crenshaw Hall, R. G. 109, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

[12]**Ibid.**

[13]Culp, "The Bolling Halls," 121.

[14]Bolling Hall, Jr., Tuscaloosa, Ala., to Mother, November 14, 1861.

[15]Culp, "The Bolling Halls," 124.

tauga Guards, and was elected orderly sergeant.[16] On September 22 Faulkner's company arrived in Iuka, Mississippi, to await assignment to a regiment.

John E. Hall, fourth in age of the Hall boys, had attended East Alabama College at Auburn, Alabama. A student of the natural sciences, he had been much interested in a trip which was to have started in December, 1860, to the West Indies with a college group to hunt specimens of plant and animal life.[17] At the outbreak of the war, he joined a college company at Auburn.[18] But, as he wrote, "the company busted up because the Governor would not accept our services."[19] From Auburn he went to Montgomery and "joined the Independent Rifles," which became the Sixth Alabama Regiment. As a private in company D,[20] he camped "at the race track about a mile and half from town . . . for about two weeks." Toward the end of May, John left Montgomery in a freight box car for West Point, Georgia. Thence he traveled to Atlanta, and on to Chattanooga, arriving at daybreak and seeing for the first time "beautiful Mount Lookout." From Chattanooga John went via Huntsville, Alabama, to Corinth, Mississippi, reaching his destination in good spirits. En route he was impressed with "the crowds of people at every station to greet us. And at every town and village we saw the Confederate flag floating in the breeze."[21]

Thus, by the end of May, Bolling, Crenshaw, and John Hall were privates in the Sixth Alabama Infantry near Corinth, Mississippi.[22] On Friday, June 6, the Sixth was ordered to Northern Virginia.[23]

[16]Compiled Military Service Record of James A. Hall, R.G. 109, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

[17]John Hall, Auburn, Ala., to Father, September 14, 1860.

[18]John Hall, Corinth, Miss., to Sister, May 31, 1861.

[19]Frank E. Vandiver, **Rebel Brass** (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1956), states that "the army had to turn down over two hundred thousand volunteers in 1861 because there were no arms available with which to equip them."

[20] Compiled Military Service Record of John E. Hall, R. G. 109, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

[21]John Hall, Corinth, Miss., to Father, May 26, 1861

[22]As far as is known, James did not enter the army until late in the summer of 1861.

[23]Crenshaw Hall, Lynchburg, Va., to Father, June 13, 1861.

By June 11 Bolling was two miles from Manassas Junction on the road to Alexandria, having arrived at that place by box cars "so crowded that there was no chance to sleep at all . . . "[24] He had heard rumors that there were 15,000 Confederate troops in the vicinity. The army was busy throwing up breastworks in anticipation of a battle which many believed would take place "in two days or less or it may be a month."[25] General Beauregard had asked one of the men in Bolling's regiment, "How is the regiment named?" The answer came back sharply, "Rifles." Beauregard replied, "I am glad of that for I will give you some shooting to do in a day or two."[26]

On Friday, June 13, Crenshaw wrote his father on stationery with the following call to arms in the upper left-hand corner:

To Arms! To Arms! ye southern braves!

The avenging sword unsheath,

And 'round your heads, or o'er your graves

Entwine the laurel wreath.[27]

Crenshaw was, however, quick to temper this patriotic sentiment with a rather severe appraisal of Colonel Seibels' discipline. He wrote, "Col. Seibels is absolutely severe." Crenshaw was impressed

> . . . that we have started from every place on Friday. We started from Montgomery on Friday, Corinth Friday, from Lynchburg, Friday. The men now think that every engagement will take place on Friday.[28]

[24]Bolling Hall, Jr., two miles from Manassas Junction, Va., to Father, June 16, 1861.

[25]Bolling Hall, Jr., Manassas Junction, Va., to Father, June 11,1861.

[26]**Ibid.**

[27]Crenshaw Hall, Lynchburg, Va., to Father, June 13, 1861.

[28]Crenshaw Hall, Fairfax Station, Va., to Father, June 22, 1861.

By June 20 General Beauregard had nineteen infantry regiments, which he organized into six brigades. The Sixth Alabama was in the Second Brigade, commanded by Brigadier General R. S. "Dick" Ewell, of the First Corps of the Army of the Potomac.[29] Crenshaw reported that the brigade was "made up of Alabama, Carolina, and Louisiana regiments."[30]

Of his new commander, he observed:

> Our soldiers though ignorant of General Ewell's history are disposed to think favorably of him. He is a splendid horseman and I believe has made his reputation fighting Indians as a trooper colonel in the Cavalry.[31]

By June 22 the Hall boys had shifted to Fairfax Station, a position about eight miles from Manassas Junction and seventeen from Alexandria.[32] The brigade was moving to the right of the main concentration of the Confederate Army. During this time the letters of the Hall boys reflect the mounting tension. Crenshaw reported that "on picket duty Bolling challenged a dog and I a rabbit."[33] Bolling wrote home requesting a bowie knife, sidearms, and a nightcap.[34] The nightcap he had was so large that it would "fit a barrel almost."[35] John complained of false alarms which caused the men to rush out to do battle only to be recalled without having fired a shot.[36] Every rumor was passed on until they became the main source of conversation among the soldiers. Practically every letter written by the Hall boys during the latter part of June mentioned a report or rumor of what the enemy was doing or about to do.[37] For example, the Yankees had "insulted the people and were nothing more than thieves and robbers."[38] An outbreak of measles in camp made it necessary to move the sick thirty-five or forty miles to Culpepper Courthouse. Crenshaw estimated that the regiment had lost ten

[29]**Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. II, 943-944.
[30]Crenshall Hall, Fairfax Station, Va., to Father, July 13, 1861.
[31]**Ibid.**
[32]Crenshall Hall, Fairfax Station, Va., to Father, June 26, 1861.
[33]**Ibid.**
[34]Bolling Hall, Jr., to Father, Manassas Junction, Va., June 16, 1861.
[35]**Ibid.**
[36]John Hall, Fairfax Station, Va., to Father, July 1, 1861.
[37]Crenshaw Hall, Fairfax Station, Va., to Father, July 13, 1861.
[38]Bolling Hall, Jr., Union Ford, Va., to James, July 1, 1861.

or twelve dead(mostly from measles.[39] By the end of June, Crenshaw himself was sick with what he described as "a fever."

The events leading to the first major battle of the war were rather unspectacular. There had been minor skirmishes with Union forces during the early part of July. In fact, Bolling was involved in one such skirmish. No one was killed, nor even injured, and Colonel Seibels told Bolling's company, "Well, boys, it was glorious but imprudent."[40] The men in the ranks thought that the Confederates were going to attack Alexandria.[41] Actually an attack on Alexandria had been in the mind of Beauregard, but when the plan was presented it was tactfully dismissed by President Davis.[42]

By July 17 it became certain that General Irvin McDowell's Federal forces were on the offensive. His move was toward Manassas Junction. Against the superior forces marching to attack him, Beauregard was not confident that he could hold his own, and fell back to the south side of Bull Run Creek.[43]

Crenshaw reported that in the retreat the Sixth Alabama was

> . . . in the rear of all for the first two miles. I thought my legs would fail me in a very trying hour, but as I preceded (sic), I still maintained my strength. We burned the bridges on the road (Rail Road) as we retreated. At length after (sic) four or five miles distance from here we reached a stream called Bull Run. Our retreat was accomplished between one and three. We did not cross the stream. In an hour Major Gordon came up with his battalion. He was much excited and said, "He had seen the enemy."[44]

The reason Crenshaw's legs had nearly failed him was that he was still sick with fever.

[39]Crenshaw Hall, Fairfax Station, Va., to Father, July 13, 1861.
[40]Bolling Hall, Jr., Fairfax Station, Va., to Father, July 4, 1861.
[41]**Ibid.**
[42]Alfred Roman, **The Military Operations of General Beauregard** (2 vols., New York: Harper, 1884), I, 7.
[43]Roman, **Beauregard,** I, 92.
[44]Crenshaw Hall, Manassas Junction, Va., to Father, July 19, 1861.

Following the retreat, the main concentration of the Confederate Army was a few miles in front of Manassas Junction. Ewell's Brigade was on the extreme right at Union Mills Ford.[45]

The battle at Manassas Junction was over by July 22, and the Confederates had accomplished the first important victory of the war. The Hall boys, however, had very little to write home about, inasmuch as Crenshaw had been sick and did not participate, and Bolling and John had been with Ewell's command on the far right which was not seriously engaged. "Of the results of battle," Bolling stated candidly, "you have more correct knowledge than I."[46] He believed that the Confederates had taken over "fifty pieces of artillery . . . killed over ten thousand and taken no one knows how many prisoners and thousands upon thousands of arms and ammunition."[47] Some Negroes who had been into the Northern lines after the battle reported that the "wounded would raise up and beg them to carry them away out of the rain . . ."[48] John sent a copy of Beauregard's and Johnston's congratulatory proclamation to his father with a letter stating that he himself had never seen the battlefield.[49]

On July 28 Bolling was promoted to corporal, Company L, Sixth Alabama Regiment.[50] Crenshaw was sent to Charlottesville "to remain untill perfectly well."[51] Bolling and John stayed at Union Mills Ford near Manassas Junction.[52]

During the lull in activity, the men had some time to reflect on the war and the future. There seemed to be impatience with the anactivity of the army. Bolling complained

[45]**Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. II, Pt. III, 440.

[6]Bolling Hall, Jr., n.p., to (unidentified), n.d.

[47]**Ibid.** The Confederates sent to Richmond 550 wounded and 871 other prisoners. **Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. II, 521. The Federals' loss was 25 guns, 481 killed, 1,011 wounded, 1,176 missing. **Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. II, 327-328.

[48]Bolling Hall, Jr., n.p., to (unidentified), n.d.

[49]John Hall, Manassas, Va., to Father, August 1, 1861.

[50]Compiled Military Service Record of Bolling Hall, Jr., R.G. 109, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

[51]John Hall, Manassas, Va., to Father, August 1, 1861. Crenshaw was dismissed from the hospital August 13, 1861. Compiled Military Service Record of Crenshaw Hall.

[52]Bolling Hall, Jr., Union Ford near Manassas Junction, Va., to Father, August 2, 1861.

that "we are now at the same old place that we started from."[53]

After rejoining his brothers, Crenshaw thought that

> . . . the war will continue till the North has lost control of money and men—their hatred is too great—this added to the immense interest they have in preserving the union will give them a sneering patriotism which will require of us many hard fought battles.[54]

Bolling doubted that peace would come soon.[55]

In August Bolling groaned, "Drilling everyday—very hot and dull times";[56] and later, ". . . our employment is the same as ever—a very dull routine it is." However, all was not dull. There was work, such as rebuilding the railroad bridges that had been burned in the retreat caused by General McDowell's opening offensive.[57] John bragged that his tent was "finely fixed up for we have managed to get enough hay to cover the ground and make a good bed of it."[58] The boys were so eager that their father visit them, but he was unable to come.

A good deal of sickness prevailed in the army. Bolling calculated that there had been "an average of a burial every day in the regiment for the last two weeks or more."[59] Not only physical disease plagued the army, but also homesickness. John dreamed about how fine it would be to "eat those beautiful apples and peaches" on his father's plantation.[60] Bolling reminisced about "fishing and hunting" back home.[61]. He also wanted to know how many brick his father had made and how many shade trees had died.[62]

[53]Bolling Hall, Jr., Sangster's Crossroads, Va., ao Father, August 18, 1861.
[54]Crenshaw Hall, Sangster's Crossroads, Va., to Father, August 14, 1861.
[55]Bolling Hall, Jr., Sangster's Crossroads, Va., to Father, September 1, 1961 .
[56]Bolling Hall, Jr., Union Mills Ford, Va., to Laura, August 11, 1861.
[57]Bolling Hall, Jr., Sangster's Crossroads, Va., to Father, August 18, 1961.
[58]John Hall, n.p., to his Sister, August 10, 1861.
[59]Bolling Hall, Jr., Sangster's Crossroads, Va., to (unidentified), September 13, 1861.
[60]John Hall, Union Mills Ford, Va., to Laura, August 1, 1861.
[61]Bolling Hall, Jr., Union Mills Ford, Va., to Father, August 2, 1861.
[62]Bolling Hall, Jr., Union Mills Ford, Va., to Laura, August 11, 1861.

The dullness of the day was on one occasion relieved by the passage of Yankee prisoners through camp. "The Yankees were," Crenshaw had to admit, "quite good looking for Yankee volunteers and were very respectably armed and equipped."[63]

However, toward the end of the year he expressed to his sister his great destestation for the enemy. "The men I am trying to kill are not like the men you see everyday—they look just like us but their hearts are mean."[64]

With the advent of autumn, the Bolling Hall boys started requesting luxuries for the winter. They wanted gloves, boots, blankets, woolen socks, books (Hardee's *Tactics* and Rollins' *Ancient History* were mentioned), letter paper, envelopes, five or six good lead pencils, and a "negro to do the cooking."[65]

Bolling reminded the family back home that the need for these things was great because their homes during the winter would be tents.[66]

In addition to the everyday employment, Bolling and John were called out on scouting parties. On one such maneuver they moved within three miles of Alexandria "and could see very distinctly the breastworks" of the enemy.[67] Bolling could not understand how two large armies "could stand watching the movements of each other without some important engagements." He reported that "our pickets and the enemies' are in constant collision." Because of this, he felt that "a great battle would be fought "before winter sets in."[68]

In October the enemy provided some spice for camp life by putting an observation balloon over Confederate territory. The men tried to bring it to earth by taking pot shots at it as it hovered high above them. Bolling write, "I see him where

[63]Crenshaw Hall, Sangster's Crossroads, Va., to Laura, September 12, 1861.

[64]Crenshaw Hall, Bull Run, Va., to Carrie, November 14, 1861.

[65]John Hall, n.p., to Father, November 3, 1861.

[66]Bolling Hall, Jr., Sangster's Crossroads, Va., to Father, September 1, 1861.

[67]John Hall, Sangster's Crossroads, Va., to Father, September 3, 1861.

[68]Bolling Hall, Jr., n.p., to Father, September 16, 1861.

I sit. It is about the size of my fist."[69]

The army prepared for winter by building log houses. The house in which Bolling, Crenshaw, and John lived was, however, a single room made of cloth "just like negroe clothes." They had no beds and pillows, but slept on straw that felt "right soft to our bones" after they had walked all day.[70] By December the boys had managed to build a log house.[71]

During the late fall, the Sixth Alabama was reassigned and placed in Rodes' Brigade, First Division, Potomac District.[72] According to Bolling, the brigade was on the right of the army and the regiment was on the right of the division.[73]

Considerable displeasure with the officers was expressed by the Hall boys. Bolling described Robert Rodes as a "tyrant who drinks very hard" and Van Dorn as a "hair brained fool who also drinks hard."[74] Colonel Seibels' brother, a major in the regiment, challenged the surgeon of the regiment to a duel. The surgeon shot Major Seibels in the left breast.[75] This event seemed to provide some release from the monotony of camp life.

Thomas B. Hall, who would be the fifth of Bolling Hall's sons to enter the service, was still in school in 1861. Tom had had ambitions to volunteer, but was induced to return to school at Tuscaloosa. This decision pleased Bolling, who wrote to him to "do his best at school in order not to disappoint father."[76]

For Bolling, Crenshaw, and John, the remaining days of 1861 were filled with minor skirmishes and preparation to resist an attack by the enemy. The men were busy "throwing up embankments and cutting down trees."[77] In November, ac-

[69]Bolling Hall, Jr., Sangster's Crossroads, Va., to Father, October 4, 1861.
[70]Crenshaw Hall, Bull Run, Va., to Carrie, November 14, 1861.
[71]John Hall, Union Mills, Va., to Father, November 27, 1861.
[72]Roman, **Beauregard,** I, 481.
[73]Bolling Hall, Jr., Union Mills, Va., to Father, November 19, 1861.
[74]Bolling Hall, Jr., Davis Ford, Va., to Father, December 21, 1861.
[75]John Hall, Union Mills, Va., to (unidentified), November 27, 1861.
[76]Bolling Hall, Jr., Sangster's Crossroads, Va., to Tom, October 11, 1861.
[77]Bolling Hall, Jr., Union Mills, Va., to Father, November 12, 1861.

cording to Bolling, "From this point to Centerville is a complete line of breast works and fortifications."[78] The boys disliked picketing in camp life, and they complained about it to their father. They also complained of the scarcity of food[79] and the inadequacy of clothing. Bolling had to trade pants to get some that fit him.[80] Bolling was discouraged because he had not received a promotion. If it were not fothcoming, he would take a "resting spell when my time is out." According to Bolling, this was the feeling which prevailed in the regiment.[81] To add to their disappointments, the Hall boys had been denied furloughs for the Christmas holidays.[82]

The Sixth Alabama spent Christmas, 1861, in an advanced position of the Confederate army. The enemy was close at hand. But on Christmas Day Colonel Seibels provided whiskey rations and the threat that if "there were any riotous conduct he would have every one arrested." Bolling's description of the celebration was simply, "You may imagine they were all a jolly set here. Everything went well though many were drunk."[83]

Information concerning James Hall from the time of his arrival in Iuka, Mississippi, late in the summer of 1861 to the end of the year is very scarce, deriving mainly from four of his letters. Prior to September 4 James attached himself to Captain T. L. Faulkner's Company, Autauga Guards.[84] Captain Faulkner had obtained from the Secretary of War promises that he would be accepted if they armed and equipped themselves. This they did, though their weapons were shotguns instead of muskets or rifles. According to James, the company had an opportunity to join his brothers' regiment, but Captain Faulkner waited too long to make his decision.[85] The company, at this time, was at Montgomery, Alabama.

[78]Bolling Hall, Jr., Union Mills, Va., to Father, November 19, 1861.
[79]John Hall, Union Mills, Va., to Father, November 3, 1861.
[80]Bolling Hall, Jr., Sangster's Crossroads, Va., to Father, October 14, 1861.
[81]Bolling Hall, Jr., Davis Ford, Va., to Father, December 26, 1861.
[82]**Ibid.**
[83]**Ibid.**
[84]James Hall, Iuka, Miss., to Father, September 24, 1861.
[85]**Ibid.**

James was elected orderly sergeant on September 4.[86] He had been offered the third lieutenancy but had refused. When his brother Bolling learned of this he wrote, "I was very much surprised at Jim's giving up 3rd Lieutent for orderly seargeant (sic). 3rd Lieutenant entitles one (sic) to carry along a trunk besides other privileges and also it is the easiest office in the company. Orderly seargeant is the hardest and has no more privileges than a private. I never was so astonished."[87] James admitted that his position as orderly sergeant was "responsible and laborious."[88]

On September 21 James' company, numbering 106 rank and file, was sent to Iuka, Mississippi, which James described as a "very pretty place." They were still uncertain what regiment they would be placed in and how long they would remain in Iuka.[89] On September 24 Captain Faulkner received an order from General Leonidas Polk at Columbus, Kentucky, to report to Union City, Tennessee. Having traveled to Union City by rail, the company there made application to General Polk to place them in an Alabama regiment if possible. By October 4 they had been assigned to Lt. Colonel Blythe's Forty-Fourth Mississippi Infantry Regiment.[90] From Union City they were ordered to join General Polk in Columbus, Kentucky, where they arrived on October 3.[91]

Columbus was a key point in the defense of the Mississippi River. When General Polk had superseded General Gideon J. Pillow as commander of what was called Department Number 2, he had begun to concentrate on the defenses of the Mississippi. He seized Columbus on September 4, barely getting there before an ambitious and active Federal commander by the name of U. S. Grant. The immediate task before Polk was to fortify Columbus and make it impregnable.

After James arrived in Columbus, he described the town as "2?0 yds. wide and a mile long, right on the high bank of

[86]Compiled Military Service Record of James A. Hall.
[87]Bolling Hall, Jr., n.p., to Father, September 16, 1861.
[88]James Hall, Columbus, Ky., to Father, October 5, 1861.
[89]James Hall, Iuka, Miss., to Father, September 22, 1861.
[90]James Hall, Columbus, Ky., to Father, October 4, 1861.
[91]James Hall, Columbus, Ky., to Father, October 3, 1861.

the Mississippi River."[92] He estimated the forces "in and around this place as from 25-50,000." During October there was little excitement except that the "Lincolnites" came down the river and threw a few shells into Columbus. James reported to his father that entrenchments were being dug and batteries planted.

James first "heard the rattle of musketry and the whistle of balls" at the battle of Belmont, November 7, 1861.[93] Belmont was a small village just across the river from Columbus. Federal forces under the command of U. S. Grant moved down from Cairo, Illinois, to begin their campaign for the Mississippi River. The enemy took a position at Belmont, and the Confederates crossed over the river to drive them away. Stanley Horn says that the battle of Belmont "was a military engagement in its simplest and most elementary form—two approximately equal bodies of infantry fighting in parallel facing lines."[94] Both Federal and Confederate troops were, for the most part, inexperienced. After a brisk fight the Federals retired from Belmont and returned to Cairo. Both sides claimed victory. Blythe's Forty-Fourth Mississippi Infantry apparently had little to do with the main action, but did follow the retreating enemy toward the shore and fire at their boats as they steamed away.[95] The Federal drive for the Mississippi River appeared to have been thwarted.

Throughout the remainder of the year, James remained at Columbus. Like his brothers he made requests for "luxuries" such as "A pillow and anything in the way of eatables . . . boots, also some letter paper and some steel pens." Except that Yankee gunboats menaced Columbus with small-scale bombardments, there was little excitement for James. The threat of a renewed Yankee attack did demand, however, that the Confederates be ready to spring to their guns "at a moment's warning."[96]

[92]James Hall, Columbus, Ky., to Father, October 5, 1861.
[93]**Ibid.**
[94]Stanley Horn, **The Army of Tennessee** (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1941), p. 65.
[95]**Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. VII, 774-775.
[96]James Hall, Columbus, Ky., to Laura, November 22, 1861.

CHAPTER II

1862

On January 1, 1862, Bolling wrote from Davis Ford, Virginia, a letter to his father that reflected both hope and despair. It sounded the note of despair because his furlough had been knocked in the head. At the same time, there was an element of hope in that he was thinking seriously about the possibility of raising a company of men from Autauga County for service in the Confederate States Army. Such a task would require a considerable leave of absence, and the prospect was most engaging. Bolling asked his father if he thought "a company of men could be raised in Autauga County."

Evidently the idea of raising a company originated with Colonel John Seibels, who was himself considering a project to raise a brigade. In a letter to Major Bolling Hall discussing the matter at length, Colonel Seibels sounded as if he were moved toward the venture more by dissatisfaction with the army than by patriotism.[1] In a postscript he observed: "What a disaster in Kentucky. The first serious one of the war. It all comes of appointing West Pointers to office." Seibels was also disappointed with the inactivity of the army. The next spring he wrote that he had "determined not to serve any longer, unless the battle here should come off soon."[2]

Entering wholeheartedly into an attempt to realize his son's ambition, Bolling Hall, Sr., went to Richmond to use his influence in securing permission for Bolling to raise a company of men and the furlough to do it. He took with him letters of introduction to Jefferson Davis and John H. Reagan.[3] In January permission to enlist men and muster them into service for the war was granted Bolling by the Secretary of War.

[1]Colonel John Seibels, Camp Davis Ford, Va., to Bolling Hall, Sr., January 24, 1862.

[2]Colonel John Seibels, Yorktown, Va., to Bolling Hall, Sr., April 23, 1862.

[3]John C. Duval, Montgomery, Ala., to Hon. John Reagan, January 12, 1861; John C. Duval, Montgomery, Ala., to Hon. Jefferson Davis, January 12, 1862.

Bolling and his father entered the project with an understanding of what was involved. In the first place, the company must consist of one hundred men. Secondly, it was to be raised at Hall's own expense.[4] Thirdly, since companies elected their own officers, there could be no guarantee that Bolling would become an officer even though he and his father had done the work and paid the bills.[5]

By February, 1862, Bolling had enlisted his company.[6] One hundred and one men had signed a statement agreeing "to assume all the duties, responsibilities, and obligations of volunteers in three years of the war in the Confederate States service." Bolling was elected captain on March 16, 1862,[7] and was sent with his company to Virginia as an addition to the Sixth Alabama Infantry Regiment, which had been reassigned to Brigadier-General Robert Rodes' brigade, General Beauregard's District, on January 14, 1862.[8]

In April, 1862, Bolling Hall, Sr., was again involved in the army careers of his sons. He procured from Colonel H. W. Hilliard a letter to the Hon. Jefferson Davis.

> I take pleasure in handing a letter of introduction to my friend Bolling Hall, Esq. to be presented to the President. Mr. Hall is a gentleman of the highest respect, ability, and of large social and political influence. He visits Richmond with the view of having his two sons now in service for twelve months transferred to my legion for the war. In every respect Mr. Hall is worthy of the President's consideration, and will, I hope, succeed in his wishes.[9]

As Hilliard's letter intimates, he was in the process of organizing his own legion of men in April. The culmination of Hall's and Hilliard's efforts did not occur until June 25, 1862, when the organization was completed.[10]

[4]Memorandum, War Department, Confederate States of America, Richmond, Va., January 24, 1862.

[5]**Ibid.**

[6]Compiled Military Service Record of Bolling Hall, Jr.

[7]**Ibid.**

[8]**Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. V, 1029.

[9]Colonel H. W. Hilliard, Montgomery, Ala., to Hon. Jefferson Davis, April 19, 1862.

[10]B. W. Brewer, **Alabama, Her History, Resources, War Record and Public Men** (Montgomery: Barrett and Brown, 1872), 597.

While Bolling Hall, Sr., sought the transfer of his three sons, military momentum increased for the Sixth Alabama Infantry Regiment. As a part of Robert Rodes' Brigade in D. H. Hill's division, the Sixth left the Rapidan on April 6 and arrived at Yorktown on April 10 to confront General McClellan's peninsular campaign.[11] The men worked building an adequate defense around Yorktown, heavy details being employed day and night to "remedy to defects, strengthen the entrenchments, and secure shelter for the men."[12]

On May 3 the Confederate Army moved out of Yorktown. The Sixth Alabama Infantry reached Williamsburg about sunrise on the 4th and rested a day. After leaving Williamsburg on the morning of May 5, they returned immediately when the enemy engaged General Longstreet at Williamsburg, but did not become involved in the fight.[13]

On May 6 the Confederates left Williamsburg under severe conditions. A storm had driven thousands of men into barns and outhouses, and it was difficult to get them to come out. The troops were cold, hungry, and tired. For three days they had received no regular issue of rations and had subsisted on parched corn or by living off the land. The army came to rest at Long Bridge, on the Chickahominy River.[14]

Toward the end of May, Bolling, Crenshaw, and John took part in the Battle of Seven Pines. Rodes' Brigade was on picket duty on the Charles City Road. By noon of May 30 it became known that the Federals were approaching on the Williamsburg Road. When this was reported to Johnston, he ordered Hill to serve with Longstreet and under his orders. Longstreet ordered Hill to prepare to meet the Federals on the Williamsburg Road at dawn.[15] Rodes' Brigade was on the right of the road. When the command was given to attack, the Sixth Alabama Infantry Regiment and the Twelfth Mississippi Infantry Regiment were the first to be thrown into the contest. The two regiments met the enemy head on in

[11]**Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. II, Pt. 1, 601.
[12]**Ibid.**
[13]**Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XI, Pt. I, 602.
[14]**Ibid.,** 605.

furious fighting; after a few minutes they withdrew sixty yards to the rear and reformed.[16]. A Federal battery opened fire on the Sixth Alabama across an open field. Rodes ordered the Sixth to abandon and take a position behind a fence and an abandoned breastwork. When reinforcements arrived, the brigade moved forward, "encountering a heavy fire of musketry and artillery from the enemy concealed behind a second row of abatis, woods, and fence."[17] The Sixth Alabama suffered severely in this second advance. John said of his company that "We went into the engagement with 46 privates, five seargeants (sic) and three commissioned officers, all of the commissioned officers were killed."[18] After fighting bravely the regiment had to fall back to a position previously held. There they were under constant fire of musketry for three hours until they were finally replaced by reinforcements. John was the only son to say anything about the Battle of Seven Pines or Fair Oaks. He reported, as well he might, that the regiment had suffered greatly.[19] Rodes in his official report estimated that the Sixth Alabama "lost near 60 percent of its aggregate force. Some of its men were drowned after having been wounded, as they fought at times in a swamp in which the water was from 6 inches to 2 feet in depth."[20] Bolling had been shot in the arm. John had been wounded in the leg and wrote from Richmond, where he was probably in a hospital. The Yankees had, he said, "fought well when they could get behind trees,"[21] and the regiment had suffered greatly.

Following the battle at Seven Pines, a major change took place in the army careers of the Hall boys. Bolling's company was transferred from the Sixth Alabama Infantry Regiment to Colonel Hilliard's new Legion. Bolling became on June 25 lieutenant-colonel commanding the Second Battalion of six companies.[22] Private John Hall now became third lieutenant in Company E, Second Battalion, Hilliard's Legion.[23] And

[15]**Ibid.**, 943.
[16]**Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XI, Pt. I, 972.
[17]**Ibid.**, 973.
[18]John Hall, Richmond, Va., to Father, June 3, 1862.
[19]**Ibid.**
[20]**Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XI, Pt. I, 976.
[21]John Hall, Richmond, Va., to Father, June 3, 1862.
[22]Compiled Military Service Record of Bolling Hall, Jr.
[23]Compiled Military Service Record of John Hall.

Private Crenshaw Hall became adjutant of the Second Battalion, Hilliard's Legion, under Bolling.[24]

Organized at Montgomery, the Legion consisted of five battalions, one of them mounted. A postwar writer credits the Legion with 3,000 men, but a more reliable report by Secretary of War G. W. Randolph in July, 1862, places the strength at 1,200.[25] On July 4 the Legion was ordered to Atlanta, and on July 11 to Chattanooga.[26] Thus by midsummer, 1862, three sons of Bolling Hall were under new commands, had received promotions, and were moving into a new theater of action.

At the beginning of 1862, James Hall was still stationed at Columbus, Kentucky. Early in January his regiment was placed in the brigade commanded by Major-General B. F. Cheatham.[27] It was believed by the Confederate command that the Federals would make an attempt to take Columbus, Fort Henry, and Fort Donelson, the river forts that stood as sentinels in the defense of Western Tennessee. In January a Federal force of 6,000 began overland from Cairo to engage Columbus while Major-General U. S. Grant moved against Fort Henry and Fort Donelson. This step toward Columbus kept the Confederates alert. James wrote about going to bed one night and hearing "a mile off . . . a sharp ringing sound like the crack of a rifle." The shots continued and then "I heard a voice in camp crying out, to arouse, to arouse, they are upon us."[28] James reported that life in camp was continually being interrupted with false alarms. There was no battle at Columbus.

Fort Henry surrendered on February 6 and Fort Donelson on February 16. Of the three successive defeats of Fishing Creek, Kentucky, January 19, 20, Roanoke Island, North Carolina, February 8, and Fort Henry, February 6, young James Hall wrote:

> I don't like our army being defeated but so far as the South is concerned I rejoice at it as it is no great loss.

[24]Compiled Military Service Record of Crenshaw Hall.
[25]**Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XVI, 747-748.
[26]**Ibid.,** 726.
[27]James Hall, Columbus, Ky., to Laura, January 14, 1862.
[28]**Ibid.**

> I hope it may cause a draft of such men as Northington who was so anxious to bring on the war—so ready and willing to "shed the last drop of his blood in defense of the South."[29]

The fall of Fort Donelson, the evacuation of Nashville, and plans for a concentration at Corinth, Mississippi, made it necessary to abandon Columbus.[30] On February 25 orders were given for the sick to be removed, along with commissary and ordnance stores of every description. The heavy guns were pulled away from their positions, and the army evacuated Columbus by February 27. Remaining until the next day to supervise the completion of the work, General Polk and his staff and cavalry then set fire to the quarters and other buildings representing months of hard work. Two 32-pounders in a remote work was about all that was left behind of military value. A biographical sketch of James Hall in the Bolling Hall Papers pictures James' retiring from Columbus with the thought that "they had been only mock soldiers in comparison to that which was to be."[31] General Cheatham took his division to Union City, Tennessee, and thence to Bethel on the Mobile and Ohio Railroad near a place called Shiloh, Tennessee.

The concentration of Confederate forces at Corinth was the initial maneuver in a series that led finally to one of the costliest engagements of the wa rin the West, the battle of Shiloh or Pittsburg Landing, April 6, 7, 1862. James described the battle of Shiloh perfectly in a few words. "The first day we carried everything before us and gained a glorious victory. The second day the game was drawn."[32] As to his own role, a "minie ball did pass under my arm once when I had raised it and passed through the cape of my overcoat."[33] His family had heard that it had been a cannon ball. To an inquiry about the use of bayonets in the battle, he answered that "whenever we were ordered to charge we started with a double quick and a shout. The Yankees wouldn't let us get in fifty yards of

[29]James Hall, Columbus, Ky., to Father, February 15, 1862.
[30]**Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. VII, 437.
[31]Bolling Hall Papers, Ramsdell Collection, Ser. I, No. 321, an undated and unidentified letter.
[32]James Hall, Corinth, Miss., to Laura, April 22, 1862.
[33]**Ibid.**

them but would run for their lives." James was proud of the fact that his comrades from Autauga had fought bravely. "Not one of them turned their backs on the enemy unless when ordered."[34] Of his company of forty-four, three were killed and seventeen wounded, "making nearly half our number."[35]

The one extant letter from James at Corinth was written after his experiences at Shiloh. He had "not been well since the battle," but thought his sickness not of a serious nature. His entire letter gave the impression that he was very despondent. He had very little to say about the battle, but a great deal to say concerning a false concept that people had about soldiers:

> You may think the soldier's life is a gay one and that he does not think much of the home, and of those he left behind. It might be so with those who joined the army for money or for fun. But with those who left their homes and friends with a smiling countenance and an aching heart, it is very, very different.

His company was in poor condition. And to make matters even worse, the weather was miserable, "raining forever."[36]

James was later sent to Canton, Mississippi, where he remained for some time convalescing from his illness. "My constitution has been tried too severely," he wrote. To his brother he declared:

> The news is always old that reaches us from Corinth and very conflicting. But (it) seems to predict an early commencement of that desparate (sic) and bloody conflict which will make the bloodiest page in the history of our Confederacy. Oh that I may be there in that struggle.[37]

By June 9, 1862, the Confederate forces had retreated from Corinth to Tupelo, Mississippi. James was stationed at Saltillo about twelve miles in front of Tupelo "between the

[34]James Hall, Canton, Miss., to Tom, May 24, 1862.
[35]James Hall, Corinth, Miss., to Laura, April 22, 1862.
[36]**Ibid.**
[37]James Hall, Canton, Miss., to Tom, May 24, 1862.

main army and the enemy."[38] On June 27 Braxton Bragg replaced an ailing Beauregard as commander of the Army of Mississippi.[39] Bragg began at once to reorganize the army and to build it into a striking force again. James wrote that "since Bragg has superseded Beauregard there have been some alterations here. We are now in Chalmer's Brigade, Wither's Division. Our division has been transferred to the reserve corps. We belong to the Army of Mississippi."[40]

On June 28 Tom Hall appeared on the scene, surprising his brother James at Saltillo.[41] Placed in the same outfit with James, Tom began at once to complain of the food. They were compelled to subsist on "nothing but biscuits without a particle of grease and hardly any salt." Sometimes they were fortunate enough to have molasses and a little beef with a small piece of "bacon for grease." Tom was impressed with the severity of Bragg's discipline, noting that he was still "having men shot, but I think from just causes now."[42] James urged his father to send him as soon as possible "two pairs of drawers and socks."[43] He was making every effort to get transferred to Hilliard's Legion, which was still stationed at Montgomery, but without success.

Early in June Federal forces under the command of Don Carlos Buell began to move toward Chattanooga from Corinth. The purpose of this maneuver was summed up by General Henry Halleck, commanding officer of Federal forces before Corinth: "By moving on Chattanooga you prevent a junction between (Kirby) Smith and Beauregard (who had not yet been relieved by Bragg) and are on direct line to Atlanta. Smith must abandon East Tennessee or be captured."[44] Also Buell's advance from Corinth toward Chattanooga set off a series of Confederate counter moves which involved the Bolling Hall boys.[45] Hilliard's Legion was ordered from Montgomery

[38]Tom Hall, Saltillo, Miss., to Laura, July 12, 1862.
[39]Horn, **Army of Tennessee,** 155.
[40]James Hall, Saltillo, Miss., to Father, July 12, 1862.
[41]**Ibid.**
[42]Tom Hall, Saltillo, Miss., to Laura, July 12, 1862.
[43]James Hall, Saltillo, Miss., to Father, July 12, 1862.
[44]**Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XXIII, 9.
[45]See K. P. Williams, **Lincoln Finds a General** (5 vols., New York: Macmillan Co., 1949-1959), III, 25-52, for Buell's advance on Chattanooga and subsequent Confederate activity.

to Chattanooga to report to General J. P. McCowan. Bolling, John, and Crenshaw arrived in Chattanooga "safe and sound" on July 14.[46] Bolling was pleased to report to his father that General McCowan intended "to permit the Legion to remain as it is an independent organization to itself."[47] The illness of two officers in Captain Wise's Company E led Colonel Hilliard to approve a petition for the election of a second lieutenant in the company. John Hall was unanimously elected.[48]

Although Buell was slowly moving toward Chattanooga, the letters of Bolling, Crenshaw, and John do not reflect any great concern. In one letter, for example, Bolling was more attentive to jealousy among the officers in the Legion than he was to Buell's threat. The derogatory manner in which officers talked in his presence about other officers left him with uncomfortable thoughts of what they probably said about him when he was not around.[49] John wrote stoically of having seen a man die. He "was perfectly well yesterday morning at breakfast. Such is nature."[50] And in another letter Bolling related that they were still foraging for food, and a good friend had been able to secure two hens. They ate one "and the other made a nest behind Johnny's trunk and laid an egg."[51]

When John heard about the defeat of Federal forces at Murfreesboro[5] by Brigadier-General Nathan Forrest, he wrote a long letter to his father relaying General McCowan's description of what had happened.

> You have seen accounts of the capture of Murfreesboro . . . If it had not been for the ladies of the place we would have been badly beaten . . . We captured the officers in one of the first movements made that is most of them including all the principle (sic) officers. But the men rallied together in the Courthouse and repulsed our forces severely. He (McCowan) says they were so discouraged that the officers could not get them to rally when just as

[46]Bolling Hall, Jr., Chattanooga, Tenn., to Father, July 15, 1862.
[47]**Ibid.**
[48]John Hall, Chattanooga, Tenn., to Father, July 15, 1862.
[49]Bolling Hall, Jr., Chattanooga, Tenn., to Father, July 19, 1862.
[50]John Hall, Chattanooga, Tenn., to Laura, July 16, 1862.
[51]Bolling Hall, Jr., Chattanooga, Tenn., to Father, August 3, 1862.
[52]Williams, **Lincoln Finds a General, IV,** 39.

all seemed lost the ladies commenced rushing out in the streets waving handkerchiefs and shouting to our soldiers to go on. There was no trouble after that. The officers and men made another charge and the courthouse was taken.[53]

By the end of July Federal forces were converging on Chattanooga. Bragg's over-all plan to meet the Federal threat in East Tennessee was to join Kirby Smith at Chattanooga and with his help "strike an effective blow through Middle Tennessee, gaining Buell's rear, dividing the Federal forces, and defeating them in detail."[54] It was Bragg's hope and prediction that before the Federals could discern his movements he could get to Chattanooga and, in front of Buell, cut off his transportation and have him in a tight place.[55]

Bragg's whole army arrived in Chattanooga on Tuesday evening, July 29.[56] The Confederate infantry had come by rail via Mobile, Montgomery, and Atlanta. James wired his father from Mobile that he would be in Montgomery for a few hours, but there is no evidence that he or Tom saw their father. Tom described the trip to Chattanooga as a " glorious time." "The ladies would come down to every station bringing meat and with fruits and all kind of vegetables." He also implied that the ladies in Alabama were far more thoughtful toward the soldiers than the ladies in Mississippi, where they might let a soldier "perish for water."[57] In the meantime, Kirby Smith moved to get possession of East Tennessee so "as to make it a base for fall and winter operations."[58] Bolling, Crenshaw, and John were, as it turned out, to be a part of Kirby Smith's operations, while James and Tom were to remain with Bragg.

Early in August Smith made his move toward Knoxville, Tennessee. On August 3 Bolling wrote that he believed they would "leave probably Wednesday for Loudon about thirty miles this side of Knoxville to operate against Nashville."[59]

[53]John Hall, Chattanooga, Tennessee, to Father, July 21, 1862.
[54]Williams, **Lincoln Finds a General,** IV, 11.
[55]**Ibid.**
[56]**Ibid.,** 41.
[57]Tom Hall, Near Chattanooga, Tenn., to Father, August 9, 1862.
[58]Williams, **Lincoln Finds a General,** IV, 10.
[59]Bolling Hall, Jr., Chattanooga, Tenn., to Laura, August 3, 1862.

According to Crenshaw they arrived near Knoxville on August 6 and camped for three days: "tomorrow we leave for Maynardville 20 miles on the road to Cumberland Gap where there has been some skirmishing lately."[60] The boys were a part of the First Division, under Brigadier General Carter L. Stevenson.

As they marched toward the Gap, Bolling observed: "The people here are very hostile. They all openly confess their love for the Yankees. You find one in twenty who is true to the South. Most of the men are in the Lincoln Army but the women are here and talk as they please which is decidedly hostile to us."[61] Besides this hostility, the Hall boys were confronted with mountains and poor roads. By August 11 they were "twenty-five miles northeast of Knoxville, and this evening will move up nearer Cumberland Gap."[62]

Because the Union forces at the Gap under General George W. Morgan were too strong and too well fortified to be attacked successfully, Smith left Stevenson's division to watch them while he pushed forward with the rest of his army into central Kentucky. Crenshaw wrote that their first position was "about 2½ miles directly in front of the Gap."[63] Bolling was impressed by the strength of the Federal position. The guns mounted on the tops of the mountains on either side of the Gap commanded "the whole country around for four or five miles."[64]

Bolling, Crenshaw, and John were dissatisfied with the inactivity and the monotony of keeping an eye on the enemy at Cumberland Gap. John complained that they had no news. "I hate to write so little but cannot help it when we are stuck in the woods where we have not seen a house in three weeks."[65] Bolling said the whole experience was like being "some distance out of the world."[66] Crenshaw remarked that "occasion-

[60]Crenshaw Hall, near Knoxville, Tenn., to Father, August 9, 1862.
[61]Bolling Hall, Jr., near Maynardville, Tenn., to Father, August 11, 1862.
[62]Crenshaw Hall, near Knoxville, Tenn., to Father, August 9, 1862.
[63]Crenshaw Hall, near Cumberland Gap, to Father, September 1, 1862.
[64]Bolling Hall, Jr., Camp three miles from Cumberland Gap, to Sister, August 27, 1862. According to a Union source in the **Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XVI, 992, they had mounted thirty-two guns.
[65]John Hall, near Cumberland Gap, to Father, September 16, 1862.
[66] Bolling Hall, Jr., Camp near Cumberland Gap, to Sister, August 27, 1862.

ally a shot and shell pass harmlessly by, but yesterday the ire of the Yankees was specially provoked and they complimented us several times with missiles of war."[67]

Small talk from the boys at Cumberland Gap ranged on subject matter from barefooted Union girls to poor mail service. Bolling told his sister that his horse Lucy was more admirable than many of the girls he had seen because "she seems to comprehend the full importance of her position and . . . will never be induced to join the Yankees as she is thoroughly for the rights of the South."[68] John moaned that he had not seen "anything like a pretty young lady" since he left home. In fact, he admitted that he "should be frightened at the sight of one."[69]

Crenshaw heard that Bragg was in Nashville (he was not) and that

> our army in Virginia is again in the neighborhood of Manassas. I believe that the most patriotic sons of the South are now battling for our rights in old Va. We will remember that they are the troops who first entered the service of the country and who have braved many dangers and hardships with but little murmuring.[70]

Kirby Smith's "turning movement" and his decided victory at Richmond, Kentucky, on August 30, rendered Cumberland Gap untenable for the Federal forces, and General Morgan evacuated the position on the night of September 17.[71] John understood that Smith had captured "something like 10,000 who were on the way to reinforce the Gap."[72] A more accurate report of the number captured would be forty-five hundred. When Stevenson moved somewhat tardily in pursuit of Morgan's forces, they were able to retreat into Kentucky. Hilliard's

[67]Crenshaw Hall, near Cumberland Gap, to Father, September 1, 1862.

[68]Bolling Hall, Jr., Camp three miles from Cumberland Gap, to Sister, August 27, 1862.

[69]John Hall, near Cumberland Gap, to Father, September 16, 1862.

[70]Crenshaw Hall, near Cumberland Gap, to Father, September 1, 1862.

[71]John P. McCowan to S. Cooper, September 22, 1862, **Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XVI, Pt. I, 1010.

[72]John Hall, near Cumberland Gap, to Laura, September 5, 1862.

Legion was left behind to garrison the Gap.[73] Some Federals who were made prisoners Crenshaw described as "renegades not worth capturing" and "the worst whipped men you ever saw."[74]

The days spent at Cumberland Gap during the latter part of 1862 were not exciting for the Hall boys. Over and over they expressed their dislike of General Stevenson, whom Bolling blamed for their being stuck at the Gap.[75] Bolling prayed "deliver me from ever getting under Stevenson again." They wanted "to be active or serve at home."

On October 26 Second Lieutenant John Hall was elected first lieutenant, Company E, Second Battalion, Hilliard's Legion.[76] That same month Colonel A. H. Bradford had succeeded Colonel Hilliard in command of the Legion, which was placed in Major-General McCowan's Second Division of Kirby Smith's army.[77] Bolling thought this move would prompt their transfer to scenes of more excitement. But the Legion remained at Cumberland Gap—called by John "the last of creation"—[78] during the closing months of 1862.

On August 28 Bragg had left Chattanooga and had begun his march into middle Tennessee to cut off Buell and drive him out of the state. His army was formed into two wings, the right under Polk and the left under Hardee. James Hall, and perhaps Tom, were in Polk's right wing.[79] James had made another attempt to get transferred to Hilliard's Legion, but without success.[80] Learning on the march of Smith's victory at Richmond, Kentucky, and the subsequent occupation of Cumberland Gap, Bragg decided to proceed directly into Kentucky. The invasion of Kentucky was to consume James Hall's time to such an extent that there were no letters from him until December. In the absence also of letters from Tom, or any mention of Tom in the letters of Bolling, John, and Crenshaw,

[73] **Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XVI, 1010.
[74] Crenshaw Hall, Cumberland Gap, to Laura, September 24, 1862.
[75] Bolling Hall, Cumberland Gap, to Sister, September 29, 1862.
[76] Confederate Military Records of John Hall.
[77] **Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XVI, Pt. II, 984.
[78] John Hall, Camp near Cumberland Gap, to Laura, September 14, 1862.
[79] **Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XVI, Pt. II, 764.
[80] James Hall, Chattanooga, Tenn., to Father, August 15, 1862.

it is impossible even to determine whether Tom took part in the invasion, but it is improbable.

James' activities can be traced indirectly by following Blythe's Forty-Fourth Mississippi. On September 13 the Forty-Fourth with another regiment was ordered to Horse Cave on the Munfordville Road to seize a flour mill. They took over the mill "containing a considerable quanity (sic) of wheat."[81] The regiment participated in an attack on a small garrison of 4,000 Federals at Munfordville, Kentucky, September 14. The attack was sharply repulsed.[82]

In the Battle of Perryville, which took place on October 8, James was not involved. He had been ordered with his division to Frankfort to support Kirby Smith. Following the Confederate victory at Perryville, Bragg missed an opportunity to win a smashing victory and moved north to Harrodsburg to unite with Kirby Smith. On October 10 the junction was made. Again the stage was set for a decisive battle, but again Bragg moved away to Bryantville and on October 13 began an active withdrawal from the state of Kentucky. On October 23 the army arrived at Knoxville, whence Polk conducted it to Chattanooga, and then Murfreesboro by rail.[83] The campaign had involved marching one thousand miles and one bloody battle, but the army of Tennessee had gained nothing.[84]

During the month of November, James was transferred to another regiment, the Twenty-Fourth Alabama. The Twenty-Fourth had begun its career in Mobile in August, 1861, and become a part of Bragg's army in June, 1862. It was involved in the Kentucky campaign but was not called upon to fight.[85] On November 14 it was transferred from the brigade commanded by Brigadier-General John K. Jackson to the brigade commanded by Brigadier-General J. K. Duncan, Withers' Division.[86] Finally, James' company, Company I, Forty-Fourth

[81]**Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XVI, Pt. I, 971-973.
[82]**Ibid.,** 972.
[83]Horn, **The Army of Tennessee,** 189.
[84]**Ibid.**
[85]Joseph Wheeler, "Alabama," VII (**Confederate Military History,** Clement Evans, ed.), 131; **Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. VI, 875-876.
[86]**Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XX, Pt. II, 403.

Mississippi Infantry Regiment, was transferred to the Twenty-Fourth Alabama Infantry Regiment, becoming Company K therein.[87] James remained in this outfit until the close of the war.

On December 10 Jefferson Davis visited Murfreesboro to size up Bragg's army for himself. During his survey, he reviewed "Withers' whole division." James described in a very colorful way what happened:

> The Brigades were drawn up in line of battle, one behind the other. The President, General Bragg, General Polk, Cheatham, Withers and other Generals with their escorts were drawn up in beautiful array on the brow of a hill in front of us.
>
> When all was ready the President with Withers by his side (because Withers' Division was being received) followed by a host of generals, rode slowly down the front of each Brigade. Each Battalion presented arms as he rode by them. I knew Marse Jeff as soon as I saw him. He was dressed in a plain broad cloth suit, and as the men said, "You cannot tell him from any other old citizen." The President then took his original position on the brow of the hill. We then marched by him in column company, the officers saluting him as they passed. We also took our Brigade positions. The whole division then saluted by presenting arms and giving three hearty cheers. This was the Grande Finale of the review.[88]

Jefferson Davis, having received his salutes and his cheers, reined in his horse and from the brow of the hill rode down into the valley, and the Army of Tennessee was to go with him.[89]

The year 1862 came to a violent close for James Hall. James' regiment, the Twenty-Fourth Alabama, was very much a part of the Battle of Murfreesboro, or Stone's River, December 31, 1862-January 2, 1863. The day after Christmas

[87]Compiled Military Service Record of James Hall.
[88]James Hall, Murfreesboro, Tenn., to Father, December 14, 1862.
[89]General Joe Johnston had given this name to Bragg's army stationed at Murfreesboro.

Major-General W. S. Rosecrans began moving his forces from Nashville toward Bragg at Murfreesboro. By December 28 there was considerable skirmishing between the two armies. James wrote that about 2:00 p.m. on December 29 he "was ordered to take the company on picket. We fought the afternoon of the 29th and all day the 30th with the enemy skirmishers."[90] By December 31 Rosecrans had his whole army before Murfreesboro just west of Stone's River.

The Twenty-Fourth Alabama was in Withers' Division, Polk's Wing. Polk had placed Withers' Division in the front line because they "had not been engaged in any heavy battle since Shiloh."[91] James, then, was in the center of the Confederate line and to the front. On the day of battle, the left side of the confederate forces, attacking at daybreak, was able to push the Federals back. James wrote that "at 7 o'clock December 31st our regiment was ordered to charge the enemy." They had to drive "through a cedar grove and an open field."[92] Phil Sheridan's troops caught the charge and forced the Confederates to fall back with heavy loss. James continued to describe the action: "Three desparate (sic) charges were made on them before they were forced from their position. The position once carried, they were driven before us for miles."[93] James estimated that the Twenty-Fourth lost "50-60 men" in that charge.

As Polk reported, by noon "the enemy . . . was driven from the field at all points occupied by him in the morning, along his whole line, from his right to the extreme left, and was pressed back until our line occupied a position at right angles to that which was held at the opening of the battle."[94] After the Union troops passed the Nashville and Murfreesboro turnpike, fresh reinforcements were able to thwart the drive of the worn Confederate troops.

On the next day all was quiet. On January 2 the Confederates made an attack in considerable strength east of

[90]James Hall's report of the Battle of Murfreesboro in Montgomery **Daily Advertiser,** January 16, 1863.
[91]**Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XX, Pt. I, 686.
[92]James Hall's report of the Battle of Murfreesboro in Montgomery **Daily Advertiser,** January 16, 1863.
[93]**Ibid.**
[94]**Officials Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XX, Pt. I, 687.

Stone's River, attempting to secure a position that would enable them to use their artillery to greater advantage, but it failed. The Federals held their position on January 3, and on January 4 Bragg withdrew from Murfreesboro toward Shelbyville.

The retreat after what seemed a great victory on the first day had a profound effect on the men. They were discouraged. James wrote a few months hence, "Why is it that all seem so hopeful? Then I stare facts in the face and I have to admit that our situation is gloomy."[95]

The Twenty-Fourth Alabama had lost at Murfreesboro twenty killed, ninety-five wounded, and six missing, making an aggregate of 118.[96] A Roll of Honor for the Battle of Murfreesboro published October 3, 1863, gratefully recognized the valor of Lieutenant J. A. Hall, Co. K, Twenty-Fourth Alabama Regiment of Infantry.[97] After Murfreesboro, James went home.

[95]James Hall, Shelbyville, Tenn., to Sister, March 31, 1863.
[96]**Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XX, Pt. II, 678.
[97]**Ibid.,** 973.

CHAPTER III

1863

At the beginning of 1863, Bolling, Crenshaw, and John were still on duty at Cumberland Gap, described by Crenshaw as "a place of small importance[1] The letters they wrote from the Gap are filled with insignificant information and elaborate descriptions having little bearing on the war. The bulk of the surviving letters during the early part of 1863 were to their sister Mary Louisa, who was very ill. In one such letter Crenshaw reported in detail upon an investigation of a cave located in the vicinity of the Gap and supposed to have been the hide-out of a "noted robber and murderer."[2] Also associated with the cave was the story that a company of young people had once gone there to explore but had turned back when the candles went out. A violinist belonging to the party had remained in the cave, playing his violin. When the young people returned with a fresh supply of candles, they could hear the musician playing but could never find him, for they were always misled by the echoes. According to the natives, on occasions one could still hear the mournful music of the lost violin player.[3]

Thi legendary music could not have been more mournful than the complaints of Bolling, Crenshaw, and John about being at Cumberland Gap. At one time they had no mail service for two weeks.[4] Crenshaw longed to "leave here, never to see this place again and to push into Kentucky and into active farfare against the Yankees. It will come to that at last and I am ready for the fray."[5] Meanwhile he would have "a good deal of work to do as is always the case at the end of the month. Returns, reviews, musters, inspections have to be tended to."[6] Bolling wished he could be with Jim, who had been quite active in the war and "was doing well." Bolling also expressed the belief that they would not stay at the Gap long, but that other troops which had been exposed in the winter campaigns would take their place and they would be

[1]Crenshaw Hall, Cumberland Gap, Tenn., to Sister, February 25, 1863.

[2]**Ibid.**

[3]**Ibid.**

[4]Bolling Hall, Jr., Cumberland Gap, Tenn., to Sister, March 19, 1863.

[5]Crenshaw Hall, Cumberland Gap, Tenn., to Sister, February 12, 1863.

ordered to active duty. This judgment, Bolling admitted, was based on his own idea as to "what ought to be done."[7] Early in the spring he confessed that he pretended to be cheerful in order to encourage his men with "hope I dare not experience myself."[8] However, John, unlike Bolling, rejoiced with the first hints of spring and wrote a happy letter to his sister about farmers plowing in the fields, trees on "the verge of blooming out," and how "the dreariness of winter has to a great extent been expelled by the merry little birds."[9]

In February the department of East Tennessee, under the command of General D. S. Donelson, was reorganized. Hilliard's Legion, which had been a part of the Fifth Brigade,[10] was broken up and placed in different brigades of the same division. The First Battalion except Company A and the Fourth Battalion were transferred to Colonel John B. Palmer's Brigade and stationed at Big Creek Gap, Tennessee.[11] Company A, First Battalion, was given to the command of Major T. W. Davies and posted at Bristol, Tennessee.[12] The Third Battalion was transferred to the command of Captain J. W. Stoke and stationed at Knoxville, Tennessee.[13] The Second Battalion under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Bolling Hall, Jr., was placed in Brigadier-General Archibald Gracie's Brigade and remained at Cumberland Gap.[14]

Although the boys at the Gap were not actively engaged with the enemy, they were occupied. Foraging parties, sometimes successful, were sent into the surrounding country. On one occasion Gracie organized an expedition of infantry and cavalry and went into Kentucky to forage. The purpose of this maneuver was to find beeves as "meat was so scarce." Late in March John took fifty men to the river about twenty miles from camp to guard ferryboats "so that the 43rd Ala. can cross the river" when they came back from a foraging

[6]**Ibid.**
[7]Bolling Hall, Jr., Cumberland Gap, Tenn., to Sister, March 19, 1863.
[8]Bolling Hall, Jr., Cumberland Gap, Tenn., to Father, April 24, 1863.
[9]John Hall, Cumberland Gap, Tenn., to Sister, March 20, 1863.
[10]**Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XX, Pt. II, 414.
[11]**Ibid.**
[12]**Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XXIII, Pt. II, 645.
[13]**Ibid.,** 644.
[14]**Ibid.**

expedition into Kentucky.[15] "Bushwhackers," Bolling observed, were "very thick in all of this section of the country." One who tried to escape capture by disguising himself as a woman was caught and not allowed to take off his feminine apparel. He would probably be shot.[16]

Bolling was proud of his regiment. After one review he commented that "Crenshaw and myself both thought that we surpassed any Regt. on the field in drill."[17] General Gracie was reported to have said after the same review that "he was highly pleased" with Bolling's regiment.

Early in 1863 Tom Hall entered the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa.[18] He wrote his brothers of his decision. They responded with letters urging him to keep going to school not only because it was best for him, but also to avoid disappointing their father.

Late in March Gracie's Brigade moved from Cumberland Gap to a position near Knoxville, but by the end of April they were back at the Gap. While near Knoxville John bought a sword that cost fifty dollars.[19] On April 25 the Legion was consolidated again, Colonel Jack Thorington replacing Colonel H. W. Hilliard, who had resigned.[20]

Early in May Gracie's Brigade marched to Bean's Station and thence to Morristown, Tennessee, where they took a train to Knoxville.[21] This maneuver was intended to put the troops in a position where they could be called upon quickly in event the enemy under General Ambrose Burnside attempted an invasion of East Tennessee.[22] The move seemed to lift the morale of the men, for they thought they would soon be sent into areas where there was more military activity. John believed that "it would help us mightily to get our men into one good fight."[23]

[15]Bolling Hall, Jr., Cumberland Gap, Tenn., to Father, March 27, 1863.
[16]**Ibid.**
[17]Bolling Hall, Jr., Cumberland Gap, Tenn., to Sister, March 19, 1863.
[18]Tom Hall, Montgomery, Ala., to Brother, February 7, 1863.
[19]John Hall, Cumberland Gap, to Father, April 20, 1863.
[20]**Confederate Military History**, VII, 234.
[21]Bolling Hall, Jr., Knoxville, Tenn., May 7, 1863.
[22]Bolling Hall, Jr., Knoxville, Tenn., to Father, May 7, 1863.

On May 9 Mary Louisa Hall died. Her condition had grown steadily worse until she was too weak even to read the letters her brothers wrote. Informed of her death by a brief note from their father, each of the four brothers wrote a letter of comfort to the bereaved family at home. These letters reveal the strong family ties of the Bolling Halls. A week before Mary Louisa's death, John had written her an optimistic letter affirming that the Confederate cause would ultimately succeed. "Our prospects are better than ever." Then, turning from the war, he reported to his dying sister that as he marched along a country road "the woods were getting green again."[24] In all probability Mary Louisa never received this hopeful letter.

During the early part of May, Bolling, Crenshaw, and John remained at a camp near Knoxville. Their health continued to be good. Bolling admitted that he had nothing to complain of except that the war appeared to be moving through its "deepest and darkest stage."[25] In fact, he had little hope that the family would be united anytime soon. Bolling's Battalion added some new recruits which made his aggregate "Five Hundren & Fifty."[26] In and around Knoxville were many Union sympathizers whose activity against the Confederates did not endear them in any way. Bolling called them "robbers and murderers of the most cruel and relentless kind." Crenshaw expressed the wish to see the "Tennessee Hills crimsoned with Traitor's and her own renegade's blood."[27]

By the end of May, Gracie's Brigade had returned to Cumberland Gap, having been sent back in consequence of Federal demonstrations against the place. They had marched from Knoxville to the Gap in four days.[28] The battalion had

> . . . present between 390 and 400 officers and men of whom about 360 are effective—the rest are sick and wagoning. Our battalion is alone on the Kentucky side of the

[23]John Hall, Bean's Station, Tenn., to Sister, May 3, 1863.
[24]**Ibid.**
[25]Bolling Hall, Jr., Knoxville, Tenn., to Laura, May 7, 1863.
[26]Bolling Hall, Jr., Knoxville, Tenn., to Father, May 10, 1863.
[27]Crenshaw Hall, Cumberland Gap., Tenn., to Father, April 16, 1863.
[28]Bolling Hall, Jr., Cumberland Gap, Tenn., to Laura, May 24, 1863.

> Gap—the enemy are reported at Barboursville about 30 miles from here in force of four or five regiments . . .[29]

The Confederate force at the Gap was composed of the Sixty-Third Tennessee, Sixty-Second North Carolina, Forty-Third Alabama, and Hilliard's Legion.[30] At this time the Legion was united again.[31] It was Bolling's impression that "we will not be long here."

While at the Gap the army was faced with the problem of an inadequate food supply. Crenshaw complained, "I hope the enemy will not conquer us by starvation."[32] Bolling and Crenshaw were also becoming quite concerned about desertions, which were so numerous that they were beginning to sap the strength of the army.[33] Bolling wrote, "A good many desertions have been going on lately from the Legion. Twenty-four of mine started but I caught eight of them and now have them in ball and chain awaiting trial."[34] One of those caught was an old man who had inspired the others to leave in "broad daylight." According to Bolling the true patriots hated the old man because he had once said "damn the Confederacy." Bolling believed he would be shot. Crenshaw approved of putting deserters in ball and chains; indeed, he thought they ought to be court-martialed and executed. According to Crenshaw, "Bragg was overwhelmed by the voice of demagogues and traitors for attempting to enforce discipline in his army by shooting one or two deserters. You see the results in the Legion. The men say the officers are afraid to shoot them . . . If we had a few more Braggs perhaps desertion would not occur so often."[35]

[29]Crenshaw Hall, Cumberland Gap, Tenn., to Father, May 25, 1863.
[30]Crenshaw Hall, Cumberland Gap, Tenn., to Father, May 27, 1863.
[31]Bolling Hall, Jr., Cumberland Gap, Tenn., to Laura, May 24, 1863.
[32]Crenshaw Hall, Cumberland Gap, Tenn., to Father, May 25, 1863.
[33]Bessie Martin, **Desertion of Alabama Troops from the Confederate Army: A Study in Sectionalism** (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), points out the connection between desertion and the poor, sparsely-settled counties of the mountainous northern part of Ala. and the swampy section of the southeast as opposed to the rich, prosperous Black Belt where there were few deserters. Men from the poor sections of Alabama worried about the economic conditions of the family back home, whereas the men from the Black Belt were seldom confronted with this. Crenshaw regarded desertion as arising simply from lack of courage.
[34]Bolling Hall, Jr., Cumberland Gap, Tenn., to Laura, June 3, 1863.
[35]Crenshaw Hall, Cumberland Gap, Tenn., to Father, June 4, 1863.

In June Major-General Simon B. Buckner, who had been in command of the Department of East Tennessee since May, inspected the troops from Clinton to Cumberland Gap.[36] They were, he reported, in bad condition "with the exception of Gracie's Brigade at Cumberland Gap; and the defenses of the Gap were imperfect." He ordered Cumberland Gap strengthened at once.

Late in June a part of Gracie's Brigade including the Second and Fourth Battalions of the Legion was ordered to Knoxville. They arrived there on June 26 still not sure of their destination, although Crenshaw believed they were to join Bragg at Tullahoma, where Crenshaw expected a great battle.[37] Actually they joined Bragg just as he was falling back from middle Tennessee, having been outflanked by his Union opponent, Rosecrans. Crenshaw summed up their experiences:

> We reached here from Tullahoma two or three days since, tired a little with our marches & hardships for we were subjected to some on the retreat which the body of Bragg's Army did not experience. We brought up the rear and on the whole march and campaign after leaving Knoxville till we returned the other night without cooking utensils of any kind.[38]

While near Tullahoma Crenshaw saw Jim "looking well and in good spirits." From Chattanooga they took freight cars to Bridgeport, and then to Knoxville, arriving back there on July 7.[39]

While at Knoxville during July the boys heard of developments on the Vicksburg front. When the reports of Vicksburg's fall became final, Crenshaw wrote, "The tide of war has rolled now until we are placed in a dangerous position."[40] But he did not lose hope, predicting that "we are nearer peace than a great many suppose. I believe in 12 months or less we will have our independence and peace." Bolling took comfort

[36] **Official Records**, Ser. I, Vol. XXIII, Pt. II, 878.
[37] Crenshaw Hall, Cumberland Gap, Tenn., to Father, June 27, 1863.
[38] Crenshaw Hall, Knoxville, Tenn., to Father, July 10, 1863.
[39] **Ibid.**
[40] Crenshaw Hall, Knoxville, Tenn., to Father, July 22, 1863.

in the theory that Union victories would make them "careless" while it would serve to spur the Confederates to "redoubled energy."[41] Evidently letters from home were discouraging, and the boys were doing what they could to bolster spirits there.

Following the Confederate defeat at Vicksburg, Burnside began upon the insistence of the Federal high command a movement into East Tennessee. As a result Gracie's Brigade was ordered to a "speedy concentration" at Strawberry Plains, Tennessee.[42] Their camp was located on "the Knoxville & Va. R.R. about sixteen miles from the former place."[43] Bolling described it as a pleasant place with plenty of fresh water. As Burnside approached Knoxville, Buckner, who had only 6,000 men, requested help from Bragg, but Bragg, who had problems of his own, could not reinforce Buckner, and instead ordered him to evacuate Knoxville and move to the Hiwassee River about thirty miles from Chattanooga.[44] Gracie's Brigade was involved in this move, leaving Strawberry Plains on August 21 and by a hot, dusty march arriving in Knoxville the next day. John reported to his father a "general impression here is that we are going to evacuate East Tennessee, for a while at least."[45] By August 27 they were camped twelve miles from Chattanooga.

James Hall began 1863 with a furlough home. He returned to the Army of Tennessee early in February. It was then stationed at Tullahoma and Shelbyville, Tennessee, with General Pork in command of the left wing and General Hardee of the right wing. James was in Company K, Twenty-Fourth Alabama Regiment, Manigault's Brigade, Withers' Division, Polk's Corps, in the vicinity of Shelbyville.[46]

James found little going on when he returned, and the situation remained that way during the early part of 1863.[47]

[41]Bolling Hall, Jr., Knoxville, to Laura, July 19, 1863.
[42]**Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XXIII, Pt. II, 949.
[43]Bolling Hall, Jr., Strawberry Plains, Tenn., to Father, August 10, 1863.
[44]Horn, **Army of Tennessee,** 244.
[45]John Hall, near Chattanooga, Tenn., to Father, August 27, 1863.
[46]**Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XXIII, Pt. II, 735.
[47]Horn, **Army of Tennessee,** 231, states: "No other Confederate army, in any theater of operations or at any stage of the war, enjoyed such a protracted period of inaction as the Army of Tennessee spent in its camps along the Duck River line during the first half of 1863.

He reported that there was some dissension in the ranks over lack of activity, but not serious. He found the health of his company good, but the weather severe.[48] His quarters were a tent.

He found the time to tease his brother, Bolling, saying that he had not written because he had been too busy fighting a war while Bolling was in comfortable quarters at Cumberland Gap. "Are you tired of Cumberland Gap? Do you long for active service? If you do here's your mule. You can hire me as a substitute. I would like to sit down in a cabin between two of those Cumberland Hills for a while and let you try active service."[49]

In the spring he wrote to his sister about the "green grass springing up so gaily. Everything is cheerful. All hearts rejoice. Nature chimes in."[50] But in the same letter he asked, "Why is it that all seem so hopeful?" If one stared "facts in the face . . . our situation is gloomy."

James was kept busy with an "immense deal of picketing." He described Rosecrans as "bristling in front" and keeping the army alert as to his every move. "Rosecrans it is thought is changing his base. Where to not known—probably to join or act in conjunction with Grant's army. I have a sort of presentiment that ere the summer closes I will again behold the beautiful 'Blue Grass' regions of Kentucky and that we will be more successful in keeping our foothold there."[51] Aside from a few minor skirmishes, James had it relatively easy.

Bad news from Vicksburg sector contributed heavily to low morale in the army. The fall of Vicksburg would, James realized, "be a severe blow. God grant that we may whip them there."[52] Information had a way of becoming distorted before it got to the Army of Tennessee. James heard officially that the "enemy had been repulsed ten times at Vicksburg," and

[48]James Hall, Shelbyville, Tenn., to Father, February 10, 1863.
[49]James Hall, Shelbyville, Tenn., to Bolling Hall, Jr., February 12, 1863.
[50]James Hall, Shelbyville, Tenn., to Sister, March 31, 1863.
[51]Ibid.
[52]James Hall, Shelbyville, Tenn., to Father, May 29, 1863.

also a rumor that Johnston had attacked them in the rear, "captured 9,000 prisoners, and routed the rest." James prayed, "O for a Stonewall Jackson to put after them." He also heard that "Lee had captured ten thousand more Yankees in Va. . . . I think the war is drawing to a close . . . A few more hard struggles and the day will be ours."[53]

Early in May he wrote hopefully that "Captain Sawyer has returned and has been ordered before the examining board to be examined for promotion . . . As soon as he vacates his present position I will step into his place."[54] In July James was made captain of Company K, Twenty-Fourth Alabama Regiment, succeeding Benjamin Sawyer of the same regiment. Much pleased at his appointment, James said that he was now in command of a fine group of boys who could "whip out the whole of Lt. Col. Hall's Battalion and not half try."[55] James appeared to take a new lease on life. "I wonder if you all at home do really think that the Yanks can whip us. Why I tell you it is the most foolish idea I ever heard of. Just wait. Why I haven't the slightest idea of being whipped on the contrary I think the poor deluded Yanks are fast rushing to their ruin . . . Don't you think so, I do."[56]

When Bolling Hall, Sr., informed his sons that Tom would enlist in the army, and inquired about the possibilities of his receiving a commission, James did not give his father much encouragement, although he admitted that Tom was more capable than some of the officers he knew.[57]

In the latter part of June General Rosecrans, the Federal commander at Murfreesboro, began to stir, and through a series of brilliant maneuvers to force Bragg back. James left "Shelbyville on the 27th . . . marched 22 miles that day and night to Tullahoma. Went out the next day in line of battle. I firmly believed that we could have whipped 100,000 of the enemy easily. But Rosy didn't choose to fight."[58] By June

[53]James Hall, Shelbyville, Tenn., to Sister, May 10, 1863.
[54]James Hall, Shelbyville, Tenn., to Sister, May 4, 1863.
[55]James Hall, Chattanooga, Tenn., to Sister, July 21, 1863.
[56]**Ibid.**
[57]James Hall, Chattanooga, Tenn., to Father, July 8, 1863.
[58]James Hall, near Chattanooga, Tenn., to Father, July 8, 1863.

29 Bragg's whole army was at Tullahoma. James saw Bolling, Crenshaw, and John there for a brief moment before they were caught up in Bragg's retreat to Chattanooga, ending on July 3. Bragg's report of his withdrawal reached Richmond on the same day that Vicksburg fell and that Lee withdrew his troops from Gettysburg.

On August 1 Tom Hall, who had enlisted as an independent volunteer in his brother's company,[59] was met at the station in Chattanooga by James. Tom began adapting immediately to army life. His letters were full of optimism about his future and enthusiastic about the cause of the Confederacy. A few days after his arrival he left for Knoxville to see Bolling, Crenshaw, and John, reaching there just as the Second Battalion of Hilliard's Legion pulled out for Strawberry Plains.[60] He got to see Bolling and Crenshaw for a brief visit, but missed John. He then came back to Chattanooga, rejoining James on August 8.

Toward the latter part of August the Federal offensive began to take shape against Chattanooga. The city was shelled, and there was skirmishing around about, though no serious engagements took place. Citizens left in such numbers that the city became rather deserted.[61] On August 21 Bragg appealed to Johnson for aid. Tom knew of this appeal and wrote his father, "I suppose you know better than I do the number of reinforcements Johnston is sending to us."[62] Actually it was two divisions amounting to 9,000 men.[63]

At the juncture Buckner evacuated Knoxville and moved to a position just north of Chattanooga. As a result all five sons of Bolling Hall were in the same vicinity and able to get in touch with one another.[64] This situation was, of course, too good to last. Chickamauga would end it.

Early in September Federal pressure on Chattanooga began to mount. James Hall had no doubt that "a general en-

[59]Tom Hall, Chattanooga, Tenn., to Laura, August 2, 1863; **Confederate Military History,** VII, 133.
[60]James Hall, Chattanooga, Tenn., to Father, August 8, 1863.
[61]James Hall, Chattanooga, Tenn., n.n., August 26, 1863.
[62]Horn, **Army of Tennessee,** 244.
[63]Tom Hall, Tiner Station, Tenn., to Father, August 31, 1863.

gagement is imminent,"[65] but Bragg was not prepared to meet the Federals there, and ordered the evacuation of the city on September 6.[66] "We have cooked three days rations," Tom wrote, "struck our tents, packed our wagons, ready to move right off. We expect to leave before dark. We do not know of course where we are going. Some think southward and (some) think we are going to cross the river on pontoons at Chattanooga to cutt off Burnside."[67] On the evening of September 7 Bragg's army retreated toward LaFayette, Georgia. James and Tom were in Polk's Corps; Bolling, Crenshaw, and John, in Buckner's Corps.[68]

Tom was very much dissatisfied with T. C. Hindman, who had replaced Beneral J. M. Withers as commander of a division in Polk's Corps.

> All I have to fear now is our new general. Hindman has proven himself to be a regular low life rowdy by what he done (sic) the other night. Our division was on the march until about two o'clock in the night. When we halted Gen. Hindman found Polk's staff camped on the spot where he had picked and he went up and roused them calling them a set of "unprincipled curs." . . . To say the least he was challenged to a duel which he did not accept.[69]

Bragg's leadership had, according to Tom, "completely out generaled all of us now."

The Hall boys found little time to write letters during Bragg's retreat toward LaFayette. James did comment on conflicting reports and opinions which made it impossible for soldiers in the field to know much of what was actually happening. Bolling informed his father that his sons were in close proximity to one another during the retreat.[70] On one occasion notes from each of them went into a single letter. The retreat

[64] Bolling Hall, LaFayette, Ga., to Father, September 15, 1863.
[65] James Hall, Chattanooga, Tenn., to Father, September 2, 1863.
[66] **Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XXX, Pt. II, 612.
[67] Tom Hall, Chattanooga, Tenn., to Father, September 6, 1863.
[68] James Hall, Chattanooga, Tenn., to Father, September 2, 1863. Also **Confederate Military History,** VII, 235.
[69] Tom Hall, near Tiner Station, Tenn., to Father, August 31, 1863.
[70] Bolling Hall, Jr., LaFayette, Ga., to Father, September 15, 1863.

involved much hard marching engulfed in dust. But James reported, as did the other boys, that the whole army was confident, "in high spirits and good fighting trim."[71]

Rosecrans, the Federal Commander, thinking the retreat from Chattanooga showed a thoroughly demoralized and beaten enemy, sent his army in a divided pursuit. Bragg's plan was to concentrate his forces on the other side of the mountainous country south of Chattanooga to wait for the Federal forces to emerge. James understood that the Federal forces "were divided and trying to unite & Bragg is attempting to keep them apart and fight them in detail but up to this time has failed in getting a fight."[72] Bragg's over-all plan was good, but he lacked the decisiveness and daring to execute it. On September 9, after a Federal corps under Major-General George H. Thomas had moved into a vulnerable position at McLemore's Cove,[73] Bragg ordered Hindman's Division to hit Thomas,[74] but owing to a maze of misunderstandings the attack was not launched, and Thomas eased out of danger. Crenshaw summed up the whole matter in a sentence: "We believed we had a division of Yankees under Thomas surrounded in the cove (McLemore's Cove) but they escaped."[75]

On September 18 at nightfall Gracie's Brigade crossed the Chickamauga River at Dalton's Ford. On September 19 they were in a line of battle facing the enemy's works near Lee and Gordon's Mill. Though under shellfire, they managed during the night to strengthen their fortifications.[76] That morning James and Tom had left their encampment at LaFayette and marched to a point about a mile and a half east of the Chickamauga River. On the march their brigade had been forced to lie down to escape further damage from enemy fire. They remained east of the Chickamauga until the afternoon of September 19, when orders came to cross to a position about two miles west of it. They reached their destination at sunset, formed a battle line, and moved through a dense undergrowth, driving the enemy before them. They returned to the original

[71] **Ibid.**
[72] **Ibid.**
[73] Horn, **Army of Tennessee,** 250.
[74] **Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XXX, Pt. IV, 632.
[75] Crenshaw Hall, LaFayette, Ga., to Father, September 15, 1863.
[76] **Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XXX, Pt. II, 413.

line of battle about nine o'clock, taking a position between the left of Hood's Division and the right of Buckner's Corps."[77]

The battle of Chickamauga commenced in earnest on September 20. Bragg's over-all plan was to turn Rosecrans's left flank, "cutting him off from the road to Rossville. Then continuing the movement so as to uncover the gaps in Missionary Ridge through which the Federals might retreat, he hoped to roll the Federal army back into eerie McLemore's Cove and there destroy it at leisure."[78] The left wing of the Federal army was under the command of General Thomas. At ten o'clock A.M. General James Longstreet hurled his forces at the Federal right.[79] James and Tom, in Hindman's Division, were a part of this movement. The enemy on their front was posted near "the crest of a hill, a gradual ascent leading to it, and behind the breastworks of logs and timber their infantry lay, opening upon the command a heavy fire at short range from their positions of fancied security."[80] About eleven-thirty A.M. the Twenty-Fourth Alabama advanced rapidly to within eighty yards of the breastworks, where they were stopped short but did not fall back. In a second assault they stormed the breastworks and drove the enemy from it. The brigade was then reformed and moved forward. By this time, the complexion of the gigantic battle had changed considerably. The extreme left wing of Bragg's army had broken through the Federal right and had thrown much of it into retreat toward Chattanooga. All now seemed to depend upon Thomas, who took a position at Horseshoe Ridge and beat off repeated Confederate attacks.[81]

In the attempt to dislodge Thomas, Manigault's Brigade, to which Bolling, Crenshaw, and John belonged, was not spared. Hindman, the division commander, wrote:

> Our troops attacked again and again with a courage worthy of past achievements. The enemy fought with de-

[77]**Ibid.,** 340-341.
[78]Williams, **Lincoln Finds a General,** V, 255.
[79]Longstreet had arrived with reinforcements the evening before and assumed command of the left wing of the army, which was east of the Chickamauga River.
[80]Brig.-Gen. A. M. Manigault's report of Chickamauga, **Official Records.** Ser. I, Vol. XXX, Pt. II, 341.
[81]Williams, **Lincoln Finds a General,** V, 262.

termined obstinacy and repeatedly repulsed us, but only to be again assailed. As showing the fierceness of the fight, the fact is mentioned that on our extreme left the bayonet was used, and men also killed and wounded with clubbed muskets. A little after 4 the enemy was reinforced and advanced with loud shouts upon our right, but was repulsed.

At 4:20 Brigadier General Preston, Buckner's Corps, in answer to my application for help, brought me the timely and valuable reinforcements of Kelley's Brigade, and within an hour afterward, the remaining brigades of his division—Gracie and Trigg's.[82]

With the arrival of Gracie's Brigade, which had been in reserve, Bolling, Crenshaw, and John were to share in the ferocious fighting at Horseshoe Ridge. The brigade charged across a field swept by the "fury of musketry, grape and canister." First to reach the top of the ridge was the Second Alabama Battalion.[83] The battalion entered the entrenchments and after a bloody combat finally took possession of Snodgrass Hill. The rest of Preston's Division then charged on. The success at Snodgrass Hill in which Bolling, Crenshaw, and John participated was a major factor in breaking Thomas's defense and sending him into a retreat toward Chattanooga.[84]

In the fighting Tom Hall had received a wound which required the amputation of one of his legs. On September 24 Bolling telegraphed his father: "Tom is very low. Come at once if you wish to see him and bring a good surgeon."[85] Bolling, Sr., came to Chickamauga, but the evidence does not show whether he arrived before Tom's death,, which occurred by September 26. Lieutenant-Colonel Benjamin Sawyer wrote a few lines of commendation in memory of the young soldier, who had "left his books and hurried forth to meet the invading band and who fell in the terrible charge."[86] Colonel N. N.

[82]T. C. Hindman's Report of Chickamauga, **Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XXX, Pt. II, 305.
[83]**Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XXX, Pt. II, 415.
[84]Horn, **Army of Tennessee,** 269.
[85]Bolling Hall, Jr., Ringold, Ga., to Father, September 24, 1863.
[86]Lines written in memory of Thomas B. Hall by Lieutenant-Colonel Benjamin Sawyer, n.d.

Davis, Twenty-Fourth Alabama Infantry, in his report mentioned that T. B. Hall, "a youth of seventeen years of age, joined his brother's company (Company K) as an independent volunteer, and fell mortally wounded while gallantly fighting the enemy some distance in advance of the regiment."[87]

James Hall was also mentioned in Colonel Davis' report as being "Conspicuous for gallantry during the day . . ."[88] General Manigault also praised James for distinguished conduct on the field. The Twenty-Fourth Alabama Infantry Regiment, which went into action with an aggregate of 381, lost 22 killed, 91 wounded, and 3 missing, making a total of 116.[89]

In the charge on Snodgrass Hill, Bolling was wounded in the thigh. He was, according to Crenshaw, shot down "leading the command under the fiercest fire" when they had "almost reached the enemy's works."[90] His division commander, General Preston, reported that after other troops had been driven back Gracie's Brigade

> was ordered to attack. The 2nd Battalion of the Alabama Legion, under Lieutenant-Colonel Hall, rushed up the slope in the face of furious fire. The color was borne by Wm. H. Hiett, who will deliver it into your hands. The brave commander was wounded, and the battalion lost nearly a third of the officers and men. The hill was carried, for a while held, and ultimately gained. The little standard pierced in eighty-three places attests the severity of the fire and the splendid courage and constancy of the men who fought beneath its folds.[91]

Bragg took the flag and placed it at the disposition of President Davis.

[87]**Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XXX, Pt. II, 347.
[88]**Ibid.,** 344.
[89]**Ibid.,** 347.
[90]Crenshaw Hall's report of Chickamauga, **Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XXX, Pt. II, 425.
[91]W. Preston, Preston's Division, Buckner's Corps, to General Braxton Bragg for the purpose of placing the Battalion flag at the disposition of President Davis, October 11, 1863. A copy of this letter is found in the Compiled Military Service Record of Bolling Hall, Jr.

On September 27 Bolling requested to be transferred to a hospital in Montgomery. The request was granted and he returned to Montgomery, going later to his father's plantation. James and John were in good health. Crenshaw was sick of diarrhea, but managed to conduct the affairs of the battalion in the absence of Bolling.

Late in September James asked his father, who had returned from the battle field, to circulate among his friends not only in Autauga but also in Talladega and Shelby Counties the following statement composed by Lieutenant-Colonel Sawyer:

> It would be unjust to my feelings were I to refrain from giving you and through you your gallant comrades an assurance of my high appreciation for your services on the bloody field of Chickamauga, and to express my admiration for the brave and gallant manner in which you conducted yourselves throughout that terrible fight . . . You fought as none but Company K could fight. The fields of Belmont, Shiloh, Munsfordville, Murfreesboro, bear witness to your bravery, but it remains for Chickamauga to develop the brightness of your glory.[92]

Bragg had won a great victory, but did not follow through to make it complete. Rosecrans managed to get back to Chattanooga. Chickamauga was a high accomplishment for the Army of Tennessee, a time for rejoicing when the "invading band" had been stopped, and thrown back; but for the sons of Bolling Hall it was also a time of suffering, and of mourning.

It was difficult for James and others to understand why Bragg had not pressed his victory. Although Rosecrans had been defeated, his army had not been destroyed. "The plans of our generals," wrote James, "remain a mystery."[93]

By October the entire Federal force was inside Chattanooga and Bragg began a siege of the city. James, as a member of Manigault's Brigade, was at Missionary Ridge,[94] while Cren-

[92]Lt.-Col. Ben Sawyer, Twenty-Fourth Alabama Infantry Regiment, to Capt. James A. Hall, Company K, n.d.
[93]James Hall, Chattanooga, Tenn., to Father, October 5, 1863.
[94]**Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XXXI, Pt. III, 617.

shaw and John were on the right about four miles south of Chattanooga. Crenshaw wrote his father that he and John, members of Gracie's Brigade, were "in very comfortable quarters especially compared with others. We have our tent stretched 60 yds. up on the side of Missionary Ridge."[95]

During October plans were underway to reorganize Hilliard's Legion as Bolling had hoped. Bolling had expressed as early as June, 1863, a desire to have the Legion consolidated into regiments.[96] In November six companies of the Second Battalion, Hilliard's Legion, Alabama Volunteers, were combined with the Fourth Battalion of the same Legion to form the Fifty-Ninth Alabama Infantry Regiment, which remained in Gracie's Brigade.[97] Bolling, who was promoted to Colonel, would command the regiment as soon as his Chickamauga wound permitted him to return to duty.

As winter began to come to the soldiers around Chattanooga, Crenshaw wrote home for "socks and drawers" and "my overcoat which Bolling carried home."[98] He also described his position as being "right of the army, Polk's Corps . . . very near where Jim was when you were here."[99]

The Confederate high command decided to send Longstreet into East Tennessee against Burnside. This maneuver was designed to relieve pressure on Bragg and ultimately to crush Burnside. In reality, it did neither, and it weakened Bragg's force. Longstreet set out with about 12,000 men,[100] a force hardly equal to the army he was to destroy. Crenshaw and John remained at Missionary Ridge, as did James. On November 23, however, reinforcements were ordered to Longstreet, and among them was Gracie's Brigade.[101] Crenshaw and John left Missionary Ridge and headed back to the country they dreaded, East Tennessee.

[95]Crenshaw Hall, Chattanooga, Tenn., to Father, October 29, 1863.
[96]Bolling Hall, Jr., Cumberland Gap, Tenn., to Father, June 5, 1863.
[97]Compiled Military Service Record of Bolling Hall, Jr., **Confederate Military History,** VII, 225.
[98]Crenshaw Hall, Missionary Ridge, Tenn., to Father, November 10, 1863.
[99]Crenshaw Hall, near Chattanooga, Tenn., to Father, October 29, 1863.
[100]**Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XXXI, Pt. II, 637.
[101]**Ibid.,** 532.

Burnside retreated to Knoxville and beat off one attack against Fort Loudon. Crenshaw and John were not in that attack, but were held in reserve. On December 15 Longstreet attempted to capture a Federal force of three brigades of cavalry and one of infantry stationed at Bean's Station, Tennessee, but the Federals were able to escape. Two months later, Crenshaw described the action as he recalled it:

> On the 14th of December, the Brigade left Rogersville and marched eight miles—arriving face to face with the Yankees about 3 miles east of Bean's Station about 3 o'clock in the evening . . .
>
> Gracie's Brigade was ordered to advance . . . and immediately moved on the enemy who we struck very soon and drove easily for awhile; as we advanced the valley widening and the enemy growing stronger in number the 2nd pushed forward to the line of skirmish and the fight commenced.
>
> We were fighting in the valley and it was only occasionally the Yankees found a halting place—but the few elevations and old houses which they occasionally occupied retarded our advance sometimes a few minutes . . .
>
> We would occasionally force them to retreat at the double quick . . . Our whole Reg. would open a volley on the blue backs as they run (sic) and then we would raise the yell and forward double quick.
>
> You should have witnessed the joy and delight of our men—but soon the Yankees would reach a good position and form their lines of defenses—then the Rebel's countenances fall—how quick then spirits change as we see that the work aint over but is still ahead.[102]

Crenshaw went on to praise the bravery of the men and especially the courage of John, who had "acquitted himself with credit." The regiment was engaged from three o'clock in the afternoon until dark. The cavalry was able to capture a

[102]Crenshaw Hall, Dandridge, Tenn., to Father, February 7, 1864.

wagonload of commissary and quartermaster stores. A single remark of Crenshaw's unintentionally summed up the significance of the engagement—"we got a little coffee and nothing more."

While Crenshaw and John were in East Tennessee with Longstreet, and Bolling was at home recuperating from his wounds, James remained with Manigault's Brigade outside Chattanooga. Late in November he was to become involved in one of the most dramatic fights of the entire War, the battle of Missionary Ridge. The corps to which James belonged, now commanded by Lieutenant-General W. J. Hardee, was posted on the crest of Missionary Ridge on the Confederate right. From this position James could see a great distance and reported that "the enemy now hold all of the valley beyond Look-Out Point."[103] On November 23 Grant, who had earlier assumed command of the Federal forces, unveiled his plans. Sherman, having moved secretly upriver, crossed over and by one o'clock P.M. was in position to assail the Confederate right. Thomas was in the center, approaching the base of Missionary Ridge. When James heard of Thomas' advance, he thought the "courier was joking."[104] On November 24 Thomas waited for action. In the meantime, Hooker took 10,000 men down the river, crossed over and in a heavy mist fought and won the battle of Lookout Mountain. On the same day Bragg's whole force was concentrated on Missionary Ridge, a position which he felt was impregnable.

The next day Sherman attacked the Confederate right but failed to break through. Hooker, in an attempt to make his way toward the Confederate left and rear, lost his way and did not arrive until the fighting was nearly over.[105] At about 3:30 o'clock P.M. Grant directed Thomas to take the skirmish line at the foot of Missionary Ridge, then halt and await orders. This move was designed to relieve some of the pressure on Sherman, who was having all kinds of difficulties with the Confederate right. Thomas' men advanced, swept away the skirmishers and then, without orders, charged Mis-

[103]James Hall, Missionary Ridge, Tenn., to Father, November 8, 1863.
[104]James Hall, Dalton, Ga., to Father, December 2, 1863.
[105]Horn, **Army of Tennessee,** 298.

sionary Ridge to the surprise of Grant and Thomas, who surveyed the battle from afar, to the Confederates on the Ridge, and probably to themselves. James was there and later described what he saw:

> The enemy advanced in three columns against us. Our batteries opened up with considerable effect. Though their lines were broken and their ranks broken they never hesitated but came straight forward. They came in no order but ascended as a great heaving mass daring all and heedless to danger—the one fixed purpose of reaching the top of Missionary Ridge. It was a sublime spectacle and I could not withhold my admiration. On they came and swept before them our men under the ridge. The enemy paused. We were confident we could hold the ridge against any cost.
>
> We looked up over our breastworks. I saw on the summit of the knoll 2 Yankees kneeling and loading, and behind them I ordered a few of my men . . . thinking they had only broken our lines on this knoll and we would easily whip them . . . but I looked and saw the left of Deas' Brigade giving away. I raised up on my tiptoes at the risk of having a bullet put through me and looked to the left. You cannot conceive my consternation when I saw Yankee colors floating all along the breastworks and Yankees by the thousands crowding over and pushing forward to cut us off . . . It required more courage to run than to stand still . . . Soon after dark we fell back to Chickamauga.[106]

From Chickamauga the beaten Army of Tennessee retreated to Dalton, Georgia, going there into winter quarters.

On December 28 James wrote to his sister, Laura, in a very unwarlike vein that he would endeavor to buy music for her as she requested, and especially wanted her to have "Annie of the Vale" and "When This Cruel War Is Over."[107]

[106]James Hall, Dalton, Ga., to Father, December 2, 1863.

[107]James Hall, Dalton, Ga., to Laura, December 28, 1863.

The year 1863 had been an arduous one for the sons of Bolling Hall, a year marked by the intense monotony of East Tennessee; by the inactivity of Bragg's army on the Duck River; by the death of young Tom Hall and the suffering of a wounded Bolling as the price of Chickamauga; and by the crushing humiliation of Missionary Ridge.

CHAPTER IV

1864

At the beginning of 1864, James Hall was stationed at Dalton, Georgia. Following the Confederate disaster at Missionary Ridge, Dalton was the place where the Army of Tennessee halted to camp for the winter. Braxton Bragg had relinquished his command in December, 1863, to become "the military adviser to the President, where he acted as a sort of chief of staff or ex officio commander in chief."[1] On December 18, 1863, Joe Johnston was ordered to turn over the Department of Mississippi to Leonidas Polk and assume command of the Army of Tennessee.

Many questioned the wisdom of Bragg's being placed in a position where he might wield considerable influence over the President and his decisions. Among his soldiers he did, however, have some admirers. James was one of them, and he claimed that his was the "sentiment of nearly the whole of the rank and file." When Bragg first

> . . . took command of this army he was hated. It was the duty of the officers no matter what they thought of Bragg to instill into the men confidence in him. It was not long before my company were all Bragg men and when he left us they considered it a dark hour for Bragg's army. They loved and respected him while they feared him. Was it not my duty to teach them this? But he is taken from us, he whom we would not have given for a Lee or Johnston or a Beauregard.[2]

According to James, Johnston did not receive a rousing welcome from the troops. In fact, his welcome was so dubdued as to be embarrassing. When he reviewed the troops, he did not receive a "single cheer in any Brigade except Vaughn's Tennessee Brigade and that very faint one."[3] James

[1]Horn, **Army of Tennessee,** 306.
[2]James Hall, near Dalton, Ga., to Father, January 31, 1864.
[3]**Ibid.**

saw that one of his own tasks was to teach the men to have the same confidence in Johnston that they had in Bragg. Although James' enthusiasm for Johnston was not exuberant, and though he, personally, was a Bragg man, other evidence would indicate that Johnston's replacement of Bragg was popular with the soldiers in the Army of Tennessee.[4]

The state of an army's morale cannot be measured by the letters of just one soldier, but it certainly can be hinted at. Early in January, young James' mind dwelt upon home.

> In stirring campaigns such as that of "Kentucky or the retreat from Tullahoma, the Chicamauga campaign—or when daily under fire of the enemy's guns at Missionary Ridge," there is much to drive from the mind thoughts of past happiness and dreams of future pleasure at home... Is it not natural that he who loves his home so as to brave this should think more of home than one merely absent(?) How often does his heart grow faint when he fears that he may sacrifice himself and yet not save his home.[5]

In another letter James mentioned that he had wanted to be home for Christmas and the New Year, and his hope that someday he would once again "enjoy the peace, the happiness, the home which he has secured."[6] Such letters are not surprising considering the brutal whipping he and his copatriots had suffered at Missionary Ridge.

That the army's supply of food was unsatisfactory appeared from remarks by James in February. "We had nothing but corn bread and hominy for dinner today. Please send by express to Atlanta one barrell (sic) of potatoes with a side of meat also in the barrell to me at Atlanta."[7] In a lighter vein and on another occasion, James wrote, "I found all quiet in camp still seeming to thrive under the blessings of good health and bad beef."[8] Johnston was able to make progress, and slowly but surely the Army of Tennessee regained its strength.

[4]Joe Cross, **Camp and Field: Papers from the Portfolio of an Army Chaplain, 1864,** 390.
[5]James Hall, near Dalton, Ga., to Father, January 8, 1864.
[6]James Hall, Dalton, Ga., to Joe Hall, January 4, 1864.
[7]James Hall, Dalton, Ga., to Father, February 15, 1864.

Winter brings its own peculiar hardships to an army in the field. There were not enough blankets, clothes, and shoes. "What a pity it is," James wrote, "that our armies cannot be better fed and clad . . . There is a great deal written and said about the sufferings of the soldier."[9] Winter in northern Georgia can be severe. On one occasion the thermometer plunged to three degrees below zero, and as late as March there was heavy snow.[10]

Johnston worked the army. "We have daily brigade drills and our Brigade is fast improving."[11] In one letter James described a sham battle in Hardee's corps, but the letter was too blurred to make out the details. As conditions improved, so did the morale. By April it was James' opinion that the army was in "good fighting trim," and that "it would be best for the campaign to open right away as we may possibly get out of trim."[12] It is interesting to note how James' attitude toward Johnston had changed from one of dissatisfaction to the confident belief that here was the man who could "break Grant's neck."[13] The return of John B. Hood to the Army of Tennessee encouraged James.[14] With these promising signs of renewed vigor and strength, James wrote optimistically, "I cannot doubt but that we will have a glorious campaign in the spring."[15] And later he stated, "I can't get rid of the idea that the Army of Tenn. will this year decide the fate of the Confederacy."[16]

During the early part of February "rumors of war" plagued the Army of Tennessee. Johnston had been informed by Polk in Mississippi that William T. Sherman was moving eastward from Vicksburg with an army of 35,000 men, presumably headed for Meridian, Mississippi, and then to Mobile, Alabama. It was President Davis' opinion that it would be

[8]James Hall, Dalton, Ga., to Father, March 29, 1864.
[9]James Hall, Dalton, Ga., to Father, April 18, 1864.
[0]Horn, **Army of Tennessee,** 315.
[11]James Hall, Dalton, Ga., to Father, February 15, 1864.
[12]James Hall, near Dalton, Ga., to Laura Hall, April 5, 1864.
[13]**Ibid.**
[14]James Hall, Dalton, Ga., to Father, February 15, 1864.
[15]**Ibid.**
[16]**Ibid.**

well if Johnston would reinforce Polk. Johnston's opinion was that such a move was unwise, and a short debate by way of the telegraph ensued. Davis' opinion became an order, and three divisions under the command of William Hardee were sent. This move depleted Johnston's force to just three divisions. James wrote:

> It will be no news to you when I tell you that three divisions have left here for Sherman's benefit. There are only three divisions here now . . . Rumor after rumor comes to us concerning the situation of affairs between Polk and Sherman. There is rumor today that Polk has fallen back across the Tombigbee (Tombigbee River) and that Sherman is crossing the river. I don't see how this can be as Sherman certainly couldn't haul pontoons on such a march and how could he cross without(?) I have usually been able to keep cool in all crises heretofore and leave the management of affairs to our authorities and trust to them. But Sherman is getting to (sic) close home. I find myself asking what are our authorities doing(?)[17]

James saw the possibility of Sherman's moving toward Mobile, taking the city, and then pressing on toward Montgomery. He had also heard that the people in Montgomery were frightened. He gave this word of encouragement: "Montgomery has enough citizens capable of bearing arms to make a good fight . . . Before this reaches you I expect to hear of Sherman's defeat."[18] This mild Union offensive was not defeated, but died down. Sherman burned Meridian and returned to Vicksburg. George Thomas, who was supposed to have marched into Georgia from Chattanooga to gain possession of Dalton when the Confederates depleted their forces to help Polk, was defeated at Mill Creek Gap.[19] James did not mention this fight in any of his letters.

In the spring days of 1864, there was little excitement in camp. The letters of the young soldier in April were mainly

[17]James Hall, Dalton, Ga., to Father, February 21, 1864.
[18]**Ibid.**
[19]Horn, **Army of Tennessee,** 315-316.

about home, "a thing of the past, probably never to be seen again."[20] There was still the hope that the grand campaign in the spring would tip the scales in favor of the Confederacy and bring victory and peace. He could write:

> Providence seems to smile on us. For notwithstanding the little reverse we have sustained west of the Mississippi (capture of fort DeRussy) our cause is in ascendant. Lee's Army, Longstreet's, Johnston's, Beauregard's and the army in Florida have now the finest morale and this makes them doubly forminable (sic).[21]

Reports and rumors of what was to happen filled the air. "We have also a report that active operations have commenced in Virginia. We expect stirring news from Va. soon . . . It is thought by some that Gen'l Johnston will advance and recapture Missionary Ridge. This will make East Tenn. Less tenable to the Yankees."[22]

In addition to false reports and rumors to contend with, men had to deal with one another and often the relationships were far from satisfactory. James told his father that the Colonel had lost his horse and suspected it was the work of the cavalry. "Col. Sawyer says that every cavalry man ought to have a board tied on his back and the word 'thief' written on it so that honest men could know him when they came about and hide their horses." James advised his brother, Hines, to stay out of the army.[23]

On April 29 he described the preliminaries of what would become a mighty Union offensive. According to him the enemy had exhibited great activity, advancing in force on the Ringold road. Confederate pickets were driven in and there was some skirmishing. As he neared the close of his letter, James wrote "I can hear the sound of cannon grow fainter and fainter."[24]

As the sound of cannon and musketry diminished in the

[20]James Hall, Dalton, Ga., to Father, April 8, 1864.
[21]James Hall, Dalton, Ga., to Laura Hall, April 5, 1864.
[22]James Hall, Dalton, Ga., to Hines Hall, April 14. 1864.
[23]James Hall, Dalton, Ga., to Father, April 18, 1864.
[24]James Hall, Dalton, Ga., to Father, April 29, 1864.

distance, and the April day passed into quiet and darkness, little did young Captain John Hall discern that the cause he served was also beginning to grow fainter and fainter, passing from day into night.

In December, 1863, Bolling returned to service after convalescing at home from the wound he had received at Chickamauga. He joined Crenshaw and John with Longstreet in east Tennessee near Morristown.[25] From the letters of these three soldiers it is clear that 1864 began on a note of despair. John was unhappy because he had asked for a leave of absence which was not granted. He admitted that he was in good health, weighed more than ever before, but was "low spirited."[26]

Crenshaw lamented:

> Since leaving Chickamauga our marches and retreats and charges have been on so extensive a scale that I can't recount all of course. And where am I to begin if I have to break into the history I think it would be the biggest volume of trials and sufferings and disappointments that could be made from the history of any books . . . Victory nowhere and defeat everywhere for us.[27]

Bolling was still suffering from his wound and was running a fever.

In January the weather was severe. Crenshaw complained that "for two weeks I do not suppose the thermometer has stood above 32° at any hour of the day or night."[28]

Every attempt was being made to outfit the men, but the progress was slow. Bolling found "180 men with no shoes at all otherwise perfectly well and fit for duty besides 100 with at least one half the foot completely exposed to the weather and the small piece of leather which they pretend to call shoe will drop off in a few days."[29] Crenshaw described the army as "badly clothed and barefooted," and with "little prospect of

[25]John Hall, Morristown, Tenn., to Father, January 10, 1864.
[26]**Ibid.**
[27]Crenshaw Hall, Morristown, Tenn., to Father, January 11, 1864.
[28]**Ibid.**
[29]Bolling Hall, Jr., Morristown, Tenn., to Laura, January 12, 1864.

relief at hand."[30] As far as he could tell the Brigade quartermaster "has only shoed a general or so from heels to belly and two or three men in each company." Bolling wrote that shoes were being made at the rate of "five or six per day to the Regt."[31]

In the beginning of the East Tennessee campaign, provisions seemed to be adequate both for men and horse, but as time went by the situation grew worse. On February 1 Bolling informed his sister that "We are all well but about to starve."[32] Late in March John believed that "Our Army cannot be subsisted much longer in this country. The Army is now getting ¾ pound of flour—½ pound of meat—Horses get ten ears of corn a day."[33] And in April he described the beef as being "so poor that you could almost see through the sides;"[34] and the flour inferior, proving upon examination to be nothing more than "rice, oats and bearded wheat all ground up together."[35] He also wrote, "You never saw poor fellows eat like we do when we get hold of a piece of bacon."[36] Despite the miserable weather, poor food, and inadequate clothing, the morale of the Hall boys did not seem to flag. "Our little army here can whip three yankees to one. They are few but brave and willing."[37]

Cold weather and lack of supplies did not paralyze Longstreet's force in east Tennessee, though most of the activity was insignificant. Bolling related on February 1 that there was a sharp skirmish "just opposite Dandridge where we are camped at present."[38] There were no casualties in the regiment.

A few days after this, the Fifty-Ninth was posted some "seventeen miles in advance of the balance of the army."[39] Because of this Bolling thought Longstreet did not consider the Fifty-Ninth as part of the army and that he preferred Bolling's men's

[30]Crenshaw Hall, Morristown, Tenn., to Father, January 11, 1864.
[31]Bolling Hall, Jr., Morristown, Tenn., to Laura, January 11, 1864.
[32]Bolling Hall, Jr., Dandridge, Tenn., to Laura, February 1, 1864.
[33]John Hall, Lick Creek, Tenn., to Laura, March 20, 1864.
[34]John Hall, near Zollicoffer, Tenn., to Carrie, April 6, 1864.
[35]John Hall, near Zollicoffer, Tenn., to Father, April 6, 1864.
[36]John Hall, near Zollicoffer, Tenn., to Carrie, April 6, 1864.
[37]John Hall, Morristown, Tenn., to Father, January 19, 1864.
[38]Bolling Hall, Jr., Dandridge, Tenn., to Laura, February 1, 1864.
[39]Bolling Hall, Jr., Dandridge, Tenn., to Father, February 7, 1864.

being placed in front of the army where they could be picked off rather than Longstreet's men. At sunrise, February 13, Longstreet began a march that approached Knoxville. Most of the men thought it was a move against Knoxville, but in reality it was a full-scale foraging party and nothing more. Crenshaw felt confident that Knoxville could be taken easily, but thought it without value since Burnside had destroyed the country and "Knoxville itself (is) reported infected with small pox."[40] The letters during February, 1864, give the impression that the army was on the march not to find the enemy, engage him in battle, and destroy him, but rather to keep warm. By the end of February, the Hall boys were at Bulls Gap, a small village about fifty miles northeast of Knoxville. They remained in that vicinity until early April, when they moved on to Zollicoffer, Tennessee.

Besides these minor movements near Knoxville, other activity was taking place. Early in February John went home on furlough.[41] Bolling became a member of a court martial.[42] Early in March occurred the re-enlistment of "The Glorious Old 59th Alabama Regiment." John, who had returned to the army, pictured the event for his sister:

> First there was a dress parade. Then Bolling simply asked the men to re-enlist and to step forward all that would enlist for the war. The "Glorious Old 59th" stepped forward every man except one or two over 50 years old. O what a glorious sight—Every man in one company enlisted—

How well I feel—It almost makes one crazy.[43]

Bolling wrote:

> I made no speech but simply explained some few things which they requested me to & then told them at the command "march" I wished all who desired re-enlist "for the war" to step forward. I gave the command & the whole regiment came forward in one solid unbroken line . . . Every other regiment was eclipsed so completely that for

[40]Crenshaw Hall, Brabons Ferry, to Father, February 14, 1864.
[41]Longstreet was very liberal with furloughs. It seemed to have a good effect on the men.
[42]Bolling Hall, Jr., Dandridge, Tenn., to Laura, February 4, 1864.
[43]John Hall, Lick Creek Bridge, Tenn., to Laura, March 9, 1864.

> a time they were dumbfounded . . . What do you say for Autauga and the 59th Alabama Regt. after that? . . . No tangible enemy can ever whip us.[44]

Bolling's feeling of exaltation over the response of his regiment was tempered as he thought of what waited them with the approach of summer. "It makes me sad," he confessed, "to think of this Regt. as it is now in such fine spirits & as it will be at the end of the summer's campaign with its weary ranks decimated by the battles we must go through."[45]

In periods of inactivity followed day by day with uncertainty, tempers were tested between individuals, and even between different parts of the military force. In February Bolling reported to his father that all was quiet and would probably continue to be so until "the enemy thresh out our cowardly cavalry again and we then will be forced to go out and recover lost ground for them." In his evaluation the cavalry was of little use and was "dwindling away to nothing."[46] According to him, "All like Longstreet, except the cavalry which he will make fight sometimes in spite of themselves."[47]

In one of the papers which his father had sent him, Bolling read that Captain Y. M. Elmore had come home after a "hundred bloody battles." Bolling queried, "How in the world he escapes so well in an hundred battles none but a cavalry man can tell. Tell the Capt. I should not allow the Advertiser[48] to publish me at home so often."[49] After reading in the *Advertiser* an announcement calling for recruits for the cavalry, Bolling asked his father to insert the following in the same paper:

> Come to the dull and plodding infantry where honor and glory awaits you—where you will become acquainted with minnie balls as thick as hail and learn to face all danger without fear but do not wait to be sent to the Cavalry where your free and roving disposition will first make its

[44]Bolling Hall, Jr., Camp 59th Ala. Regt., to Father, March 10, 1864.
[45]**Ibid.**
[46]Bolling Hall, Jr., Dandridge, Tenn., to Father, February 7, 1864.
[47]Bolling Hall, Jr., Morristown, Tenn., to Father, January 12, 1864.
[48]The Montgomery **Advertiser.**
[49]Bolling Hall, Jr., Zollicoffer, Tenn., to Father, April 10, 1864.

> nature apparent in advancing in a direction contrary to that of the enemy when the rattle of muskets resounds and the whistle of balls become unmusical.[50]

In early March Longstreet was called to Richmond to confer with President Davis, Lee, Bragg, and the War Department. This event had everyone guessing about the future. John thought that "when he gets back he will fall back to Jonesboro or Bristol."[51] Later on he was sure that they would "move somewhere in two or three days. Some think Longstreet will move into Kentucky (I hope it may be soon) others think he will move south."[52] According to Bolling, "Some think that as all our cavalry nearly has been sent to join Joe Johnston via North Carolina that we are soon to follow. Others judging from the fact that we have here Breckenridge, (sic) Buckner, Fields, and John H. Morgan all Kentuckians that we are to invade that state."[53] John heard that "10,000 troops are on their way to reinforce Longstreet."[54] By April Buckner was in command of a division consisting of Gracie's, Law's, and Bushrod Johnson's Brigades. At this time the sons of Bolling Hall were in the Fifty-Ninth Alabama Regiment, Gracie's Brigade, Buckner's Division, Longstreet's Corps. Bolling was colonel, Crenshaw, regimental adjutant, and John, first lieutenant, company B.[55]

On April 7 Longstreet was ordered to Charlottesville, Virginia.[56] In this position he could move to the aid of Lee on the Rapidan or to the defense of the Richmond-Petersburg area. Buckner was placed in command of East Tennessee.[57] Concerning this move, Crenshaw wrote:

> Of course you have heard of Genl. Longstreet's transfer to the Army of Genl. Lee—I regret that he has not taken us with him . . . Law's Ala. Brigade very recently assigned

[50]Bolling Hall, Jr., Zollicoffer, Tenn., to Father, April 10, 1864.
[51]John Hall, Lick Creek, Tenn., to Laura, March 20, 1864.
[52]John Hall, Lick Creek, Tenn., to Carrie, March 24, 1864.
[53]Bolling Hall, Jr., Hdqrts. 59th Ala. Regt., to Laura, March 25, 1864.
[54]John Hall, ollicoffer, Tenn., to Father, April 6, 1864.
[55]Compiled Military Service Records of Bolling, Crenshaw, and John Hall.
[56]**Official Records,** Ser. I, Vol. XXXII, Pt. III, 756.
[57]**Ibid.**

to Buckner's Division has by special order of the President again been assigned . . . and leaves for Virginia Friday. Genl. Gracie today is trying to effect an exchange with Genl. Law. Law has been for a long time in arrest & was restored to his command only yesterday . . . In view of this hostile feeling between him and Genl. Longstreet an exchange may be accomplished for our Brigade . . . The great Battle for Richmond must be an important one and it would be a source of pride and gratification hereafter to all who acquit themselves bravely there. Even though we do not exchange with Law's Brigade I believe that when the Battle is fought we will be there.[58]

Within the week, orders came that made Crenshaw a prophet. The sons of Bolling Hall were in the troops called to share in the defense of Richmond. They left Abingdon, Virginia, in boxcars on April 27, 1864,[59] bound for Richmond, "lighthearted at the prospect of being in the last battle of the war."[60]

The fact that Bolling reported that his troops were under orders to embark for Lee's Army on April 26[61] fills in a minor missing link. According to D. S. Freeman, Johnson and his Tennessee troops, of which the Bolling Hall boys were a part, had been ordered by Bragg to move from the Virginia-Tennessee border to Richmond late in April to share in the city's defense. In a footnote Freeman wrote, "The dates neither of Bragg's order nor of Johnson's departure from the vicinity of Zollicoffer, Tenn., appear in available records."[62] In all probability the orders were received three or four days prior to the 26th. This would have given them time to make ready and march to Abingdon, Virginia, which is not far from Zollicoffer, Tennessee. They left Abingdon on the 27th.[63]

They traveled by train in cars filled with fifty men to a

[58]Crenshaw Hall, Zollicoffer, Tenn., to Father, April 20, 1864.
[59]Bolling Hall, Jr., Abingdon, Va., to Father, April 26, 1864.
[60]Bolling Hall, Jr., Lynchburg, Va., to Father, April 28, 1864.
[61]Bolling Hall, Jr., Abingdon, Va., to Father, April 26, 1864.
[62]Freeman, **Lee's Lieutenants,** III, 460n. See **Official Records,** Vol. III, Pt. II, 664.
[63]Bolling Hall, Jr., Lynchburg, Va., to Laura, April 28, 1864.

car.[64] On April 29 they arrived and camped near Richmond.

That night Crenshaw and some others went to the theater in Richmond, where for $2.50 they saw "a very nice actress that acted and danced for us," a satire on Russian court life, and government officials in the social circle.[65] Next morning they marched through Richmond en route to the camp. Crenshaw overheard citizens saying that "the regiment bore the marks of service." They camped on the Mechanicsville Road, "4 miles from Richmond and near the celebrated Chickahominy swamp." During the trip from Tennessee Bolling had become sick, and was later hospitalized in Richmond.[66] In camp rations picked up and some of the men were given meal, some bacon, shoes, hats, loaves of bread, sugar, coffee, and "peas everyday."[67]

John was very pleased to be away from East Tennessee, which he never wanted to see again. In Virginia "the good ladies share their meals with the soldiers and wear shoes and do not chew tobacco." He made further comparisons:

> There is such a difference in the Citizens of East Tenn—go to a house and ask for a piece of meat and bread and the answer you would get would be with a long union bushwhacking face, "I haven't got a bite to save my life. I have got three children here and I just know we'll all die this winter. We're bound to starve." Go to a house here and how will you be received? Everything will be given you that can be got—the lady of the house will tell you if she had only two meals—you shall have one.[68]

The Brigade was assigned to the Department of Richmond under the command of Major General Robert Ransom.

On May 4 Bolling wrote that he had no idea "what is intended to be done wit hus. We are here probably to guard against a flank movement through the peninsula."[69] About

[64]Crenshaw Hall, near Richmond, to (?), April 20, 1864.
[65]Crenshaw Hall, near Richmond, to (?), April 30, 1864.
[66]Compiled Military Service Record of Bolling Hall, Jr.
[67]John Hall, east of Richmond, to Father, May 1, 1864.
[68]John Hall, near Richmond, to Laura, May 3, 1864.
[69]Bolling Hall, Jr., east of Richmond, Va., to Father, May 4, 1864; between May 4 and May 22 no letters are available. In order to reconstruct their military activity, I have relied on **Official Records,** and Freeman's **Lee's Lieutenants,** III, 450-495.

midnight Grant moved his forces across the Rapidan River and engaged Lee in the wilderness. South of Richmond Ben Butler, a political general, advanced up the James River on May 5 and took a position with Richmond on the right and Petersburg on the left. Butler's aim was to threaten Richmond, and to wreck railroads and communications below the city. Later he was to link forces with Grant and Meade and destroy Lee.

In the face of this maneuver, Bushrod Johnson and the troops from Tennessee were ordered to Drewry's Bluff on the James River above Butler. This was on the night of May 5-6. At 11 A. M. on May 6 Ransom ordered Johnson[70] to port Walthall Junction.[71] Gracie's Brigade remained at Drewry's Bluff,[72] while the struggle for the railroads raged south of Richmond and north of Petersburg. If the Union forces could take the railroads leading into Richmond, the fall of that city would be impending.

Gracie's Brigade at Drewry's Bluff was reinforced.[73] Ransom, using Gracie's and Barton's Brigades, struck out on May 10 from Drewry's Bluff on a reconnaissance to locate the exact position of the enemy's van, which was reported on "Winfree's Farm opposite Chester."[74] John sketchily described the role of the Fifty-Ninth Alabama Infantry in this section:

> We have been in three separate fights. The first at Drewry's Bluff about the 10th of this month was comparatively a small affair. Our Regt. lost not a single man but captured more than sixty prisoners and killed ten Yankees that we are certain of besides many others that might have been killed and wounded.[75]

By the night of May 10-11 Major General Phil Sheridan,

[70]**Official Records,** Vol. XXXVI, Pt. II, 664.

[71]Port Walthall Junction was an important junction on the railroad between Richmond and Petersburg. If the enemy had taken this point, it would have been a gain of far-reaching proportions. It would have effected Lee in his fight with Grant, brought nearer the collapse of Richmond, and placed Union forces in an advantageous position against Petersburg.

[72]**Official Records,** Vol. XXXVI, Pt. II, 965-966.

[73]Freeman, **Lee's Lieutenants,** III, 468.

[74]**Official Records,** XXXVI, Pt. II, 914.

[75]John Hall, Chafin's Bluff, Va., to Laura, May 22, 1864.

coming down from the Wilderness, threatened Richmond with 10,000 Union cavalry. The city had been emptied of defenders in order to protect Drewry's Bluff and the Richmond and Petersburg Railroad. To deal with Sheridan, Ransom was recalled from Drewry's Bluff.[76] John reported the action that saved the city:

> We went to Richmond and there met Sheridan and his raiders. We fought him for sometime in two or three miles of Richmond. The 43rd Ala. was thrown in front of the Brigade as skirmishers. They opened the fight but did not fight long before they fell back to the Brigade when Genl. Gracie ordered a new line of skirmishers out. I was sent with my company on this line. We advanced—met the enemy and drove him some distance when (I being on the right of the line) finding the enemy flanking us reported to the commander of the line when he gave orders to retreat. We then retired to the brigade.[77]

By the 15th a stiff fight was shaping up for Drewry's Bluff. "We were ordered," John wrote, "to give every man sixty rounds of ammunition and see that their guns were in good order. All knapsacks were under charge of the Quarter Master and we were ready for the bloody fight we knew on the morrow would lay many a good fellow lifeless."[78]

The plan of attack was simple. Butler was in a line from Bermuda Hundred to City Point with his base at Bermuda Hundred on the James River. The objective was to cut off Butler from his base at Bermuda Hundred. Ransom's Division, to which the Fifty-Ninth Alabama belonged, was to begin the attack on Butler's right.

At 4:45 A.M. on May 16 Ransom advanced his Division. "Fog delayed and confused, but Ransom's men pushed vigorously ahead and, in about an hour, carried the first line of Federal fortifications, which consisted of rifle pits and breastworks."[79] Several days later John described the attack:

[76]**Official Records,** Vol. XXXVI, Pt. II, 995.
[77]John Hall, Chafin's Bluff, Va., to Laura, May 22, 1864.
[78]**Ibid.**
[79]Freeman, **Lee's Lieutenants,** III, 486.

> We charged the enemy from their works. In this fearful charge we suffered our loss in killed and wounded. We were hotly engaged for nearly an hour during which time our gallant boys were falling right and left. The Regt. lost twenty killed and one hundred and forty-two wounded, some mortally, some severe and some slightly. My company lost 4 killed and fifteen wounded . . . A ball passed through my coat and lodged in my pocket—but did not hurt me . . . Every captain in the Regt. was hurt except myself . . . After the fight I rallied our few surviving comrades—formed the Regt. and if Genl. Gracie moved us forward again we expected to engage the enemy again right off.[80]

In that blistering hour, Bolling was shot three times through the ankle and foot. Fifteen minutes later Crenshaw was struck "just above the collar bone—the ball passed downwards."[81] They were both taken to General Hospital No. 4, Richmond.[82]

The battle continued all day and resulted in Butler's being bottled up in Bermuda Hundred. Beauregard contented himself with "five captured colors, his five guns and his 1388 prisoners as compensation for 2506 casualties."[83] John was impressed with the captured stores which included "sugar, coffee, meat, crackers, baked turkeys, and other things the Yanks had prepared for eating."[84]

Following the battle, the Fifty-Ninth Alabama encountered danger of a sort they had not known in East Tennessee.

> Since the fight we have lay (sic) all the time under fire of the Yankee gunboats and batteries and they have shelled us day and night allowing us little time to sleep. Several men had both legs cut off by these shells from the Yankee gunboats . . . These shells weighing 200 lbs. are the worst things I ever saw."[85]

[80]John Hall, Chafin's Bluff, Va., to Laura, May 22, 1864.
[81]Bolling Hall, Sr. (Father), Richmond, Va., to Laura, May 26, 1864.
[82]Compiled Military Service Records of Bolling and Crenshaw Hall.
[83]**Official Records,** Vol. XXXVI, Pt. II, 204, 205, 206.
[84]John Hall, Chafin's Bluff, Va.. to Laura, May 22, 1864.
[85]**Ibid.**

On May 21 they received orders to move from their position in front of Bermuda Hundred back to Drewry's Bluff. John then reflected on the strange, and illogical, life of a soldier: "and now here we are on Sunday—a warm clear day—in fine winter quarters all fixed up in good houses in hot weather after having spent one of the coldest winters ever known without shelter."[86]

Major Hall came to Richmond on May 25-26 to tend to the needs of his two wounded sons. At first he was encouraged about Bolling's condition, believing that his leg would heal, but on May 26 the leg had to be amputated just above the ankle joint.[87] By May 31 his father had him removed from the hospital to the Spotswood Hotel in Richmond. Crenshaw's condition was also serious, but he improved rapidly and by May 31 was transferred from the hospital to a private residence (Judge Campbell's)[88] Bolling was able to leave Richmond for home on July 9, and Crenshaw followed on the 13th.

As Grant edged down past Richmond, fighting Lee all the way, John felt the "big fight was drawing nearer and nearer."

> Grant is swinging around to the Peninsula and of course Lee is keeping between him and Richmond. They will soon be down here with us. Lee is only ten miles from here now or rather from Richmond. We will be in the great fight, and the last fight of the war yet. God grant that we may be victorious and finally establish our independence. I wish to live at peace at home with you all once more.[89]

On June 5, "We are still having stirring times at Drewry's Bluff, Chafin's Farm and Richmond. Lee's Army is now very near us—so near that as I write I can easily hear musketry . . . I think there has been hard fighting between Lee and Grant all day. They are fighting all the time nearly."[90]

[86]Ibid.
[87]Bolling Hall (Father), Richmond, Va., to Laura, May 26, 1864.
[88]John Hall, Chafin's Bluff, Va., to Laura, May 31, 1864. Judge Campbell was evidently the Assistant Secretary of War, John A. Campbell of Alabama, who had been an associate justice of the United States Supreme Court.
[89]John Hall, Chafin's Bluff, Va., to Laura, May 29, 1864.
[90]John Hall, Chafin's Bluff, Va., to Hines, June 5, 1864.

Grant, deciding to bypass Richmond and go for Petersburg, moved east from Cold Harbor, swung south, and crossed the James River. The first wave of Federals attacked Petersburg on June 15, but Beauregard managed to stave them off. Subsequently reinforcements were rushed to Petersburg, among them the Fifty-Ninth Alabama Regiment, Gracie's Brigade, including John's regiment.

> About two o'clock on the 17th the 59th Alabama Regt. got orders to report to General Beauregard below Petersburg. Cars were ready for us and we were only 2½ or 3 miles from town—so by 3 o'clock we were in Petersburg and by 4 o'clock had reported to General Johnson and Beauregard.[91]

In the meantime, as Freeman tells it,

> Beauregard had received no relief from the attacks that had begun disastrously at dawn of the 17th. Toward evening the assaults became more furious. About dusk a desperate attack by a Division of the IX Corps breached another section of the line and took Battery 14, which had been held by a part of Wise's command. The arrival of Archibald Gracie's Brigade prevented deep penetration.[92]

For the Fifty-Ninth Alabama the fight proved extremely severe, and John described it in more detail than was usual with him.

> The Regt. was ordered immediately to the front . . . the enemy discovered us before we got near the battle field and poured a most terrible fire of grape and shell into our ranks for some time doing however little damage of a serious character. We were ordered to occupy a part of the lines which had no fortifications upon it . . . The enemies' sharpshooters were very bad and in easy range. I put the detail at work—the sharpshooters shooting at us all the time both armies being in the same field, but had worked only a very few minutes when the Yanks charged our entire line. I put my detail with Johnson's Brigade on

[91]John Hall, Fort Clifton, Va., to Father, June 21, 1864.
[92]Freeman, **Lee's Lieutenants,** III, 535.

my right and made them fight. Wise's Brigade on my left gave away . . . The 59th was ordered in, by this time Elliot's Brigade had given way also on the left. They (Fifty-Ninth Alabama) came charging . . . moved to the left where our line was giving way fastest and then charged some distance over the breastworks after the Yankees. The 59th being alone was compelled to fall back to the works—there they stood until the Yankees were completely in our rear having taken our works on the left. I was on the right of the regt. with the working detail fighting with the Regt. for I joined it when it came into the fight. I reckon I was lucky in not being with my company although I will always regret it. As it was on the left of the regt. it suffered most in killed and wounded and prisoners . . . The Regt. lost 62 killed and 53 wounded just one month from the Battle of Drewry's Bluff making it a loss of 280 . . . A few more such fights will wipe us out . . . It was the tightest place I ever got into.[93]

Beauregard managed to withdraw to a new position, and by noon of June 18 Lee had finally arrived and the bulk of his army was moving in. Federal assaults were thrown back with heavy loss. As Beauregard wrote in later years,

> The evening of the 18th was quiet. There was no further attempt on the part of General Meade to assault our lines. He was "satisfied," as he said in his report, that there was "nothing more to be gained by direct attacks." The spade took the place of the musket, and the regular siege was begun. It was only raised April 2, 1865.[94]

John Hall found being in the trenches "a miserable life . . . so confining. One dares not even stand up for the minute his head appears above the works just then fifty balls are sent at it."[45] John was kept occupied; "if we were to stay in the trenches a thousand years some work would be found to keep

[93]John Hall, Fort Clifton, Va., to Father, June 21, 1864.

[94]G. T. Beauregard, "Four Days of Battle at Petersburg," **Battles and Leaders of the Civil War,** edited by Clarence C. Buell and Robert A. Johnson (4 vols., New York: The Century Company, 1887-1888).

[95]John Hall, Petersburg, Va., to Laura, July 14, 1864.

the men employed."[96] The men remained in the trenches for two or three days, and then came out to be replaced by another regiment. When they returned to the trenches, John complained that everything was torn to pieces "so that we have to remodel entirely—Moving then, so often, is not pleasant to the soldier, to say the least of it."[97] While out of the trenches, they were a part of the reserves which were to be used in any part of the line that might be threatened at any time.

> In case of an assault upon our lines, the reserves would have to march through open fields exposed to the full fire of the enemies' arms of all sorts until they reached the outer line of fortifications . . . We are without shelter, whereas in the trenches we had our bomb proofs which afford some protection from falling rain . . . Thus you see the beauty of being in reserve.[98]

John confessed of being bored. "It is hard to write anything here, as we have the same things over one day after another and seldom leave the trenches to hear or see anything new."[99] And then to add to their misery there was the awful bombardment—the endless rain of shot and shell. He estimated that one of the shells thrown by a mortar battery weighed "130 pounds."[100] A man whom John saw get his brains knocked out did not even groan. At night "as many as 20 lighted mortar shells were in the air at one point crossing each other and making all kinds of noises";";[101] they "filled the air like ascending and descending stars passing each other on their hostile missions and descending to the line of an opponent."[102] The men, in order to protect themselves, built "bomb proofs" which did little good except shield theim from the rain and inclement weather. To dodge the shells as they came over became something of a sport, if a very precarious pastime; according to John some of the men became very agile and adept at the art.

At times the enemy threw smaller shells which could not be

[96]John Hall, Petersburg, Va., to Father, August 27, 1864.
[97]John Hall, Petersburg, Va., to Father, September 7, 1864.
[98]**Ibid.**
[99]John Hall, Petersburg, Va., to Laura, September 7, 1864.
[100]John Hall, Petersburg, Va., to Laura, September 2, 1864.
[101]Crenshaw Hall, Petersburg, Va., to Father, October 16, 1864.
[102]John Hall, Petersburg, Va., to Father, November 10, 1864.

dodged. John concluded that as far as shelling was concerned, "we stand in hot water all the time."[103]

The letters of Bolling Hall's sons usually displayed little humor, but there seems to be a larger number of quips in the letters from Pttersburg in 1864 than in any others. For example, John told about a soldier who was uninjured when struck by a rifle ball but "mortally scared to death."[104] John wished that "Grant would do his do and quit for the winter."[105] Thieves were so bad that they even "stole a corpse which was at the depot awaiting transportation."[106] The Forty-First Alabama charged some Yankee pickets and captured all of them. One of the men had been taking a nap, and when a Confederate kicked him he "jumped up crying, 'Oh Lordy, Oh Lordy.' He thought he had been hit by a mortar shell."[107] General Johnson and General Gracie brought some women into the trenches. To the men it was a novel sigrt to see the ladies walking up and down with their parasols hoisted. The most mischievous of the boys wished that the Yanks would throw a few shells over "to try the courage of the ladies. I don't know what they would do."[108]

As the summer wore on, Grant slowly and methodically stretched his line, creeping toward the vital railroad lines that nourished Petersburg and Richmond. John hoped that Lee would "prevent Grant from extending his line father around the city."[109] By the end of August, Grant had taken the Petersburg-Weldon Railroad.[110] On September 16 the Confederates made a cattle raid and came back with 2,468 beeves[111] which, Bolling said, "make a big show."[112]

Bolling and Crenshaw had returned to duty in September, and their attitudes had changed. They were not as optimistic as they had once been. Crenshaw spoke of "darkening clouds,"

[103]John Hall, Petersburg, Va., to Laura, September 12, 1864.
[104]John Hall, Petersburg, Va., to Laura, September 16, 1864.
[105]John Hall, Petersburg, Va., to Laura, October 5, 1864.
[106]Crenshaw Hall, Petersburg, Va., to Father, October 24, 1864.
[107]John Hall, Petersburg, Va., to Father, November 10, 1864.
[108]John Hall, Petersburg, Va., to Laura, October 5, 1864.
[109]John Hall, Petersburg, Va., to Father, August 27, 1864.
[110]Freeman, **Lee's Lieutenants,** III, 588-589.
[111]**Ibid.**
[112]**Bolling Hall, Jr.,** Petersburg, Va., to Laura, September 20, 1864.

and Bolling admitted that "our situation is dreadful."[113] Bolling's health declined. He could not endure the strain of trench life and constant exposure to the elements and shells. Late in November he returned home "looking thin and badly." This marked the end of his career as a Confederate soldier.[114]

The Hall letters indicate that for the most part Gracie's Brigade defended the "immediate front to Petersburg," and being "in line from the Appomattox River . . . over a mile east of Petersburg."[115] Toward the end of the year they were in Gracies's Brigade, Bushrod Johnson's Division, Anderson's Corps' On December 3, Gracie was killed[116] and the Brigade was turned over to Col. Y. M. Moody. Late in December John became sick and was sent to the hospital.[117]

John listened one clear and pleasant Sunday to the ringing of church bells and thought of the good days that once were. But his daydreams were rudely interrupted by the explosion of a shell that called him back to reality, the reality of mortars, the fading strength of the army, the death of friends, the rumors of defeats and setbacks on other fronts, and the miserable life in the trenches.[118]

When Grant made his move against Lee and crossed the Rapidan on May 4, 1864, Sherman mounted his offensive against Joe Johnston in Georgia. The letters of James Hall from this time to the end of the war were meager, not only in information but in numbers. The reasons for this are many. He was on the move constantly. And when he did have time to write, he was probably too exhausted. Mail delivery became very undependable. Paper and ink became scarce, and paper was poor.

Sherman's campaign against Johnston was not dramatic, but it was relentless. Johnston retreated in good order, destroyed bridges and railway track, "keeping his antagonist constantly on the offensive, avoiding open warfare, fighting

[113]Bolling Hall, Jr., Petersburg, Va., to Laura, October 14, 1864.
[114]Bolling Hall, Sr., Home, to James, November 30, 1864.
[115]Crenshaw Hall, Petersburg, Va., to (?), (?).
[116]Freeman, **Lee's Lieutenants** III, 631.
[117]Bolling Hall, Sr., Home, to James, December 30, 1864.
[118]John Hall, Petersburg, Va., to Laura, September 20, 1864.

him at advantage behind prepared intrenchments, and not permitting him to attack with his superior numbers."[119] During this retreat James did not lose confidence in his commander and clutched to the belief that if he could survive Sherman's advance he would live to tell his children about the war.[120] "All along the route," James recorded, "we were marching and fighting all the time."[121]

Both armies became convinced of the advantage of having breastworks and "during the remainder of the Dalton-Atlanta campaign followed the practice of throwing up entrenchments wherever they stopped long enough."[122] James recognized the value of trenches and told his sister at the beginning of Sherman's advance: "If the enemy fight us in our trenches we will win I think the most complete victory of the war."[123]

Sherman pressed on until Johnston was forced back to Atlanta. On July 14 it was rumored among the men that "Pres. Davis and Bragg and some say Cooper (General Samuel Cooper) are in town . . . The boys say if Bragg is in town we will have either a fight or a foot race soon."[124] The rumor proved to be in tpart true. Bragg was there, but President Davis was not. The purpose of Bragg's visit was to see first hand the situation in Georgia, measure Johnston's plan and strategy, and see what could be done. Johnston, though he was not aware of it, was being weighed in the balance and found wanting. He was relieved of command on July 17, and the Army of Tennessee was handed to John B. Hood. This meant just one thing; Atlanta would not be given up without a fight.

As to this move, James made no comment in the available letters. He did write that "With God's blessing on our efforts I believe the present campaign will end the war in our favor. I hardly think now that Atlanta will be given up."[125]

[119]J. G. Randall, **The Civil War and Reconstruction** (New York: D. C. Heath and Co., 1937), 553.

[120]James Hall, near Dalton, Ga., to Laura, May 9, 1864.

[121]James Hall, near New Hope Church, to Sister, June 18, 1864.

[122]Horn, **Army of Tennessee,** 331.

[123]James Hall, near Dalton, Ga., to Laura, May 9, 1864.

[124]James Hall, near Atlanta, to Father, July 14, 1864.

[125]**Ibid.**

Sherman then planned to go after the railroads leading into Atlanta, knowing that he could not take Atlanta by direct assault. The first target was the Georgia Railroad that entered the town from the northeast. To accomplish this Sherman divided his forces, sending one unit to approach Atlanta from the northeast and the other unit, under the command of Thomas, to cross Peachtree Creek from the north. The distance between the two units of the Union army enticed Hood. On July 20 the new Confederate commander sent his forces against Thomas.[126] Thomas held and Hood retired to the city's defenses. In the battle of Atlanta that followed two days later, Hood sent Hardee behind the Union army to attack them from the rear while he directed a frontal assault. It was a remarkable plan and well executed, but it failed. James reported very little about this but did mention that "On the 22nd we charged the enemy's works and carried them capturing 8 14' guns and several stacks of colors."[127]

The battle of Ezra Church was fought on July 28, and the Union army succeeded in cutting the Macon and West Point Railroad.[128] This action resulted in the siege of Atlanta. Once again James was miserly in discussing a battle only to write, "We charged on the 28th and were repulsed."[129] If James' letters were to get home, they had to be sent by hand down the railroad.[130] During the violent fighting, Ben, James' slave, ran away. James surmised that he was hiding in the woods. James instructed his father, in case Ben returned home, to thrash him "and send him back to me."[131]

Both Union and Confederate cavalry maneuvered behind the lines. Wheeler, Confederate, rode behind Sherman and did a great deal of damage to his communications. James wrote, "Our latest news from Wheeler is that he has burned the bridge over the Etowah River and torn up several miles of the track and is still going north tearing up track as he goes."[132] Wheeler went as far north as Knoxville, but the Union forces finally

[126]Horn, **Army of Tennessee**, 351-354.
[127]James Hall, near Atlanta, Ga., to Father, July 31, 1864.
[128]Horn, **Army of Tennessee**, 354-359.
[129]James Hall, near Atlanta, Ga., to Father, August 12, 1864.
[130]James Hall, near Atlanta, to Father, August 2, 1864.
[131]**Ibid.**
[132]James Hall, Atlanta, Ga., to Crenshaw, August 19, 1864.

forced him into north Alabama. Union cavalry swung south to Jonesboro, seized the line at Jonesboro, and wrecked the station and lifted a few rails. The Confederates ran them off, repaired the track, and had trains on it within a few days. This convinced Sherman that the cavalry would not do the job properly to destroy the railroad. Sherman kept up a heavy bombardment of Atlanta. Of this James wrote, "The Yankees are now shelling us and keeping us in our ditches as they do everyday."[133] Sherman moved twenty-two miles below Atlanta toward Jonesboro. Hood sent troops down the railroad to meet him, but Hood was overwhelmed on August 31 and September 1. Hood evacuated Atlanta, retreating south to Lovejoy's Station, and Sherman entered Atlanta, September 2.[134]

According to James, he was not in the fight of August 31 because he was under arrest for disobeying an order of an adjutant concerning the number of pickets to be posted.[135] He had dysentery and was getting deathly tired of cold beef and corn bread.[136] During one of the battles near Atlanta, James had had a narrow escape. A minie ball passed through the visor of his cap, knocking it off and "whirling it around a half dozen times before it reached the ground.." His clothing had been struck four times though he had lost blood only twice since leaving Dalton.[137]

After the fall of Atlanta, James claimed that the Army was "much less demoralized than you would suppose."[138] On September 21 Hood moved due west about twenty-five miles to Palmetto, Georgia. From this place James wrote one letter that has been preserved. It was filled with despair: "I am sick of this war." He had lost respect for his commanding officers and thought about giving up as an infantryman and joining the cavalry. His attitude seemed to have changed overnight. He spoke of being overcome by a sense of loneliness:

To be conscious that there is no one in the vast multitudes around to whom you trust as a friend, to know that you might

[133]**Ibid.**
[134]Horn, **Army of Tennessee,** 368.
[135]James Hall, Lovejoy Station, to Father, September 12, 1864.
[136]**Ibid.**
[137]James Hall, Atlanta, Ga., to Crenshaw, August 19, 1864.
[138]James Hall, near (?), to Father, September 4, 1864.

have no friend to care for you in sickness or death, or to whom you would wish to entrust last messages to Father, to brothers and sisters—this is the sense of loneliness.[139]

On September 25 President Davis visited the army and reviewed the troops. James only mentioned it. At the time he felt that Hood would return to Atlanta and flank Sherman out of the city. Union prisoners had spread the word that this could be done anytime Hood got ready.[140]

Atlanta was not to be taken, however. Instead Hood moved north against the Western and Atlantic Railroad.[141] At Allatoona there was a sharp encounter and the Confederates were driven off. James commented: "We tore up track from Big Shanty to Allatoona and from Tilton 6 miles below Dalton to Tunnel Hill." But tearing up track, though inconvenient for Sherman and his army, was not delivering damaging blows. Hood now embarked upon a plan to cross the Tennessee River, wreck communications well in Sherman's rear, move on Thomas and Schofield and rout them before they reached Nashville, advance into Kentucky and gather recruits.[142]. By October 21 the army had reached Gadsden, Alabama. From this place James wrote, "I think we are going into Tenn."[143] They left Gadsden on October 22 and marched down the Tennessee River to cross at Florence, Alabama. James' two letters from Florence indicated that he did not know exactly what was happening: "I have no idea in what direction we move."[144] It was bitter cold. By November 16 the river had been crossed, and Hood moved toward Nashville.

Just before the river crossing, James was invited to a dance. He managed to borrow enough clothing to make himself decent. It was amazing to him that at one moment he was too "dirty to be seen" and the next he was spending time with

[139]James Hall, Palmetto, Ga., to Father, September 26, 1864.
[140]**Ibid.**
[141]Horn, **Army of Tennessee,** 374-377.
[142]**Ibid.**
[143]James Hall, Gadsden, Ala., to Father, October 21, 1864.
[144]James Hall, Florence, Ala., to Father, November 4, 1864.

a "bevy of gay young ladies."[415] He lamented, "They will soon pass from my memory and I from theirs."

Hood marched on to disaster at Nashville, where his army was completely whipped by Thomas.

[415]James Hall, Florence, Ala., to Laura, November 12, 1864.

CHAPTER V

1865

The war had brought physical ruin to Bolling Hall, Jr. After his return home late in 1864, he tried an artificial leg, but it proved very uncomfortable and painful. According to his military service record, he was paroled at Augusta, Georgia, on May 18, 1865.[1]

Bolling was not cut out for war. His letters reveal that he was a very delicate and sensitive person. He was thoroughly committed to the cause of the Confederacy, but was the first to see the futility of continued resistance. His life was doubly tragic. A man of promise, education, and character, the war smashed him, stripping him forever of any opportunity he might have had to make a worth-while contribution to society. And then his death came painfully and slowly. As he waited, he could also see death coming for the Confederacy. Men killed instantly in battle never knew this kind of suffering. He died in January, 1866.

Crenshaw remained in the trenches at Petersburg. Bitter as it was to him to see desertion become a large-scale matter,[2] he seemed to comprehend it better than he had before. "A man," he wrote, "may pass through 49 battles and in all conduct himself with courage and gallantry—and in the 50 (th) he may fail—his courage gone."[3] He tried to make the best of his miserable existence. He and another man built a bomb proof which they considered "as near perfection as a hole in the ground could be."[4] It had a door, a glass window, a cottage bedstead, and an elegant fireplace. They covered it with a pile of dirt, but the first rain caved in the fillars and demolished it.[5]

During the fading days of the Confederacy, Crenshaw knew nothing of the future. He felt, however, that Lee's Army

[1]Compiled Military Service Record of Bolling Hall, Jr.
[2]Crenshaw Hall, Petersburg, Va., to Bolling, Jr., February 22, 1865.
[3]**Ibid.**
[4]Crenshaw Hall, Petersburg, Va., to Laura, February 25, 1865.
[5]**Ibid.**

would strike "many more honest blows for the Confederacy."[6] He believed that the Army would probably retreat into the interior where it could be refreshed and rebuilt. When he heard that President Davis had been authorized to call in Negro troops, he protested vehemently, but confessed that he preferred this humilitation to subjugation.[7] As he contemplated the future, he remarked that he "might leave the country and wander in Mexico or South America."

On April 1 his brigade was involved in the Battle of Five Forks.[8] In all probability he was there; and he may have been with Johnston's Division when they stacked arms at Appomattox.[9] He was paroled on May 14, 1865, at Montgomery, Alabama.[10]

In January, 1865, John had written Bolling that desertions were so numerous that it seemed that the regiment had "sent reinforcements to Grant."[11] The few available letters from John do not indicate any great loss of faith in the cause of the Confederacy. He did feel that the citizens had become lukewarm and needed encouragement in some way. John was rsigned to more fighting. During February he was still at Petersburg in "our old position at the 'Crater.'"[12]

Possibly in the Battle of Five Forks, John was struck in the left scapula by a minie ball and taken to the Fair Ground Port Hospital, where he was made a prisoner of war on April 3, 1865. He was transferred to the General Hospital, Petersburg, on April 7, 1865. And on July 10, 1865, he gave his pledge not "to take part in hostilities against the Gov't. of the United States until properly exchanged."[13]

After Hood had been defeated at Nashville, he retreated. During Christmas, 1864, he crossed over the Tenniessee River and went into camp at Tupelo, Mississippi, on January 10,

[6]Crenshaw Hall, Petersburg, Va., to Laura, March 12, 1865.
[7]**Ibid.**
[8]Freeman, **Lee's Lieutenants,** III, 675.
[9]**Ibid.,** 748.
[10]Compiled Military Service Record of Crenshaw Hall.
[11]John Hall, Petersburg, Va., to Bolling, January 28, 1865.
[12]John Hall, Petersburg, Va., to Laura, February 8, 1865.
[13]Compiled Military Service Record of John Hall.

1865.[14] About 4,000 of the Army of Tennessee were shipped to Mobile from Tupelo and the remainder to South Carolina. While en route, James was able to stop off at home and spend some time.[15] When James returned to the army he was in two skirmishes. His orderly sergeant was wounded by his side.[16] Sherman forged ahead toward Goldsboro, North Carolina. By March he was in North Carolina. On March 12, 1865, James wrote: "I suppose we go again to confront Sherman. I have now 27 men besides myself. I don't know when I'll have another opportunity to write."[17] He did not write. James was wounded in the "last fight of the war,"[18] presumably Johnston's stand against Sherman at Bentonville. James was taken to General Hospital No. 3, Greensboro, North Carolina, in March. While still in the hospital on May 1, 1865, he was paroled.[19]

Thus came to a close the Civil War experiences of the sons of Bolling Hall, five Confederate soldiers of whom it can be said, gave their lives to a dying cause.

[14]Horn, **Army of Tennessee,** 420-428.
[15]John Hall, Petersburg, Va., to Laura, February 8, 1865.
[16]Crenshaw Hall, Petersburg, Va., to Laura, March 12, 1865.
[17]James Hall, Goldsboro, N.C., to Father, March 7, 1865.
[18]J. M. J. Tolly, Greensboro, N.C., to James, April 22, 1865.
[19]Compiled Military Service Record of James Hall.

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VITA

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While a student at the seminary he served the Memorial Christian Church, Fort Worth, Texas. Following graduation from the seminary he was minister of the Memorial Christian Church, Jacksboro, Texas, and later associate minister of the University Christian Church, Austin, Texas. Since 1957 he has been minister of the First Christian Church, San Marcos, Texas, and a student in the Graduate School of The University of Texas.

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